THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A STUDY OF WILLIAM MORRIS'S NEWS FROM NOWHERE IN RELATION TO VICTORIAN THOUGHT

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. R.D. McMASTER

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1960

PREFACE

No other of the books of William Morris is quite so appealing as his utopia, News from Nowhere. Written in 1890, when he was almost sixty years of age, it has, despite its apparent simplicity, a maturity which might well qualify it as a classic . Besides a mature style, it reveals a delicate sensitivity to the thoughts and emotions of Morris's fellowmen and an awareness of the past in relation to the present and the future.

In the Victorian age of transition and confusion Morris maintained an optimistic view of life. In a letter to a friend in distress he wrote that "life is not empty nor made for nothing, and that the parts of it fit one into another in some way; and that the world goes on, beautiful and strange and dreadful and worshipful."[1] He sought for all men the blessings of life - fearless rest and hopeful work; and these through the development again in England of popular art. Such was his simple, straight-forward message to humanity. One may read it in his own varied life as a decorator, dyer, designer, illuminator, printer. One may read it also in his poetry, his romances, his utopias, especially in News from Nowhere. For beyond all his labors was the constant vision of a "new day of fellowship, and rest, and happiness" (211).

In this thesis I shall attempt in Chapter I to relate William Morris to his nineteenth-century environment and to show that his utopia was a natural outcome of such influence. Chapter II will indicate

how Morris's sensitivity to the welfare of his fellowmen developed into a unique philosophy of art and socialism. The following chapter will be devoted to an examination of the texture of life in the utopian land of "Nowhere", where "the good life" is built on a cornerstone of popular art. And finally, Chapter IV will conclude this study with an analysis of the form and technique William Morris employed in depicting his visionary world.

How William Morris came to his philosophy of socialism through his theory of art and how this philosophy was the natural outcome of Morris's personality and his reaction to influences of the nineteenth century are the matters which I wish to consider in this study.

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Chapter I

NEWS FROM NOWHERE - A PRODUCT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENVIRONMENT

A. General Historical Background

When William Morris came of age, at mid-century, there was a "sense of change" in the air, a feeling of excitement, of a new era about to begin. Socialism in many forms was beginning to stir men's minds. The Chartist Movement had risen to a climax and had subsided for a time, leaving in its wake a new interest in the working class, an interest which was to continue developing for decades. People were to recognize the laborers as a part of the social structure as they made their demands through co-operative movements, strikes, trade unions, and campaigns for democratic representation. The demand for a classless society as the foundation for a socialistic structure and the growth of Democratic Federations and Socialist Leagues were to effect "a concentration of interest upon poverty, its grounds, and incidents and consequences, which could not again be relaxed." [1] In the eighties the demand for greater opportunities for human fulfilment was to mount to new heights and the air was to be "charged with a subtle potency", reminiscent of the atmosphere bred by the Christian Socialists and the Pre-Raphaelites after the mid-century.

The workers' demand was for political freedom. But the thinking man realized the tension was of deeper significance: "Shall the condition of England be remediable without organic change, not in the political but

in the economic system?"[2] Once political democracy had been realized, could there be any Utilitarian stopping place in economic life short of pure collectivism? J. S. Mill had drawn attention to the problem in these terms:

> The social problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action, with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour. 3

By 1885 Great Britain was ripe for the growth of a Socialist movement, "if presented as a fulfilment of their Liberal Radical ideas." [4] Morris could see no use in people having political freedom unless such freedom brought to all people better living conditions and more opportunities for creative, happy lives. [5]

The social problem was indeed the central problem of the age. The inhuman conditions of life in the industrial areas were frightfully exposed in the forties by Friedrich Engels, who had gained a knowledge of early capitalism and industrial life at first hand by working in his father's textile plant at Manchester. He wrote thus:

> The condition of the working-class is the real basis and point of departure of all social movements of the present because it is the highest and most unconcealed pinnacle of the social misery existing in our day. 6

Throughout the first half of the century blind competitive commerce, backed up by the dominant theories of utilitarianism and <u>laissez faire</u>, persisted in looking at itself as an end, and not as a means. Continuing its strangle-hold, it reduced the entire working class to a state of "unpraised, unrewarded, monotonous drudgery" that maimed the bodies

and blunted the sensibilities. Morris's conviction grew that "all true freedom, all living art, all real morality . . . finally depend upon the physical and social conditions of life which exist for the mass of [illegible] fellow-creatures."[7] His utopia is therefore a life of fellowship without mastership, a life of heaven upon earth. A Dream of John Ball, in which Morris in 1888 was feeling his way toward a utopian romance, gives the gist of his utopian thought:

> I bid you not dwell in hell but in heaven, or while ye must, upon earth, which is a part of heaven, and forsooth no foul part. 8

Such visionary exhortation in an age of uninhibited self-interest naturally evokes an accusation of unrealistic daydreaming, the accusation that the author is, as Morris once described himself, "the idle singer of an empty day".* It is a charge we can almost hear Gradgrind making, clucking his tongue with great satisfaction in his own solidity and adherence to sound, practical sense. The vindication of Morris's utopian daydreaming, however, is best expressed in the words of his master John Ruskin:

> Since the time of Cervantes the purest impulses and the noblest purposes have perhaps been oftener stayed by the devil, under the name of Quixotism, than under any other base name or false allegation.
>
> Quixotism, or Utopianism: that is another of the devil's pet words. I believe the quiet admission which we are all of us so ready to make, that, because things have long been wrong, it is impossible they should ever be right, is one of the most fatal sources of misery and crime from which this world suffers. Whenever you hear a man dissuading you from attempting to do well, on the ground that perfection is "Utopian", beware of that man. Cast the word out of your dictionary altogether. There is no need for it. Things are either possible or impossible—you can

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* "an apology", in The Earthly Paradise

> easily determine which, in any given state of human science, If the thing is impossible, you need not trouble yourselves about it; if possible, try for it. It is very Utopian to hope for the entire doing away with drunkenness and misery out of the Canongate; but the Utopianism is not our business--the work is. It is Utopian to hope to give every child in this kingdom the knowledge of God from its youth; but the Utopianism is not our business--the work is. 9

"...[P]erhaps the clue to the Victorian paradox is the rushing swiftness of its intellectual advance, and the tranquil evolution of its social and moral ideals." [10] Though Evangelicalism had been dominant in the 1830's, it was by the fifties beginning to be viewed with revulsion as a middle-class point of view.[11] The conflict between evangelical traditions and the modern world was brought to a head by the growth of mechanical science, scientific Biblical criticism, and the development of the theory of evolution. There followed a wave of agnosticism and 'consciously increasing Atheism', and an attitude of reverence, not for God, but for the life of Man upon the Earth. The dominant attitude became: "... [L]et us turn to the living . . . and refuse to let Earth be joyless in the days to come." [12]

Utilitarianism and materialism were consequently carrying home their assaults upon the human mind, and old ethical certainties were giving way to a relativistic code of ethics. G.M. Young points out that " a sense of vagueness, of incoherence and indirection, grows on us as we watch the eighties struggling for a foothold in the swirl and wreckage of new ideas and old beliefs." [13] England was struggling between the old and the new worlds and attempting to effect

a compromise. Morris wrote as follows:

> Let us admit that we are living in the time of barbarism betwixt two periods of order, the order of the past and the order of the future . . . [W]e can both of us, I the hopeful and you the unhopeful, work together to preserve what relics of the old order are yet left us for the instruction, the pleasure, the hope of the new. So may the times of present war be less disastrous, if but a little; the times of coming peace more fruitful. 14

Such was the ethical and intellectual climate in which News from Nowhere was conceived.

Records reveal that sensitive people were in constant revolt against the brutality of the industrial system, the false values fostered by commercialism, the aridity of the debate between religion and evolution. They feared that the increasing waves of utilitarianism, naturalism, and materialism would wipe all aesthetic values from the face of the earth. Many withdrew into a world of beauty - in art, literature, and even religion - and shunned their responsibility to humankind. Though suffering from the ugly aspects of modern life, Morris remained undaunted by it. Because of his remarkable individuality, his enthusiasm and energy, he continued to find pleasure in his work and to inspire others to seek the pleasures of life. Haunted by a sense of swift approaching death, he strove for a realization of his vision - a life for all of "simplicity, harmony, and fellowship, and the healing influences of nature . . . ."[15] With its insistence on the ethical and artistic qualities of life, the aesthetic movement, in which Morris was a prime mover, contributed its share to the turmoil of the late nineteenth century, but perhaps

it also hastened the economic progress of England. For News from Nowhere is more than a craftsman's paradise - it envisions a socio-economic structure of life diametrically opposed to that of Victorian England.

B. Immediate Personal Background of News from Nowhere

Besides the general conditions which have been sketched briefly in the foregoing section, several specific occurrences in the late eighties made it imperative that Morris express his hope for the future in more impelling terms than he had hitherto done in his romances, poetry, and essays.

He had grown somewhat disillusioned because of constant bickering and discordant aims within the Socialist League, and also because of the ineffectuality of the "Bloody Sunday" uprising of the working classes on November 13, 1887 in Trafalgar Square. Though his eyes were opened to the slow process of changing society, he refused to become discouraged by temporary defeats. When the request was made for a serial story in 1890 for the Commonweal, the Socialist paper of which he had been editor, he cheerfully complied with News from Nowhere, in installment form, written partly to raise his own spirits and partly to encourage his Socialist co-workers.

Morris might not have written News from Nowhere had not Edward Bellamy, an American utopist, risen to ascendancy after 1888 among Socialist thinkers in America and in Great Britain. His publication of the utopia, Looking Backward, provoked Morris into a reply or

rebuttal, because Bellamy's theories violated the very foundations of Morris's conception of Socialism. Bellamy believed implicitly in the idea of progress for society by way of the industrial system which he admired. He therefore advocated a stronger centralization of population, an increased use of machinery, and a greater degree of regimentation of society in order to secure the benefits of industrialism. This was such a distinct clash with Morris's teaching that he is reported, upon reading Looking Backward to have stormed that "if they brigaded him into a regiment of workers he would just lie on his back and kick." [16] A sense of the historical development of society, process instead of progress, was entirely lacking in Bellamy, and thus he failed to base his utopia on an idea of "continuity and fluidity" so basic to a thriving community. Still more irritating to a man of Morris's artistic temperament was Bellamy's entire omission from his utopia of the aesthetic side of life. In short, Bellamy had not realized the underlying differences between capitalistic and communistic systems, nor had he allowed any room for the integration of art and life. Annoyed by the popularity that the Socialism in Looking Backward was receiving both in America and Great Britain, Morris became intent on turning the tide of socialist thought to what he considered more wholesome and agreeable channels. His dream of London was not the "Cockney paradise" of Bellamy's Boston; his vision of the England of the future was still that expressed in The Earthly Paradise of 1868-70:

> Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
> Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
> Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,
> And dream of London, small and white and clean,
> The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green . . . 17

C. The Influence of Carlyle and Ruskin

". . . I fare to feel as if he [Carlyle] were on the right side in spite of all faults."[18] These words of William Morris indicate that his own philosophy was in the same line as the idealism of Thomas Carlyle. John Ruskin had, in fact, acted the part of intermediary between the two: many of Carlyle's concepts had been remoulded and reshaped by Ruskin before they were passed on to Morris. In the hands of each of these men, certain ideas that Carlyle had uttered in his vehement outbursts against civilization's wrongs took distinct and unique form as a practical protest against the crass materialism of the century. It is Ruskin, however, that Morris most frequently called his "master". In 1894 he spoke in retrospect when he said,

> The latter, before my days of practical Socialism, was my master . . . how deadly dull the world would have been twenty years ago but for Ruskin! It was through him that I learned to give form to my discontent, which I must say was not by any means vague. Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilization. 19

This opposition to nineteenth-century life was, in fact, the point of departure for all three men, but they differed in the inten-

sity of their concern for mankind and the degree to which they worked out a practical solution to the "nineteenth-century dilemma". Carlyle expostulated on the shortcomings of individual man and why each should act rightly for the good of society. Ruskin, and Morris after him, tried to discover how mankind might find the 'good life', though their methods of attaining it differed sharply in several respects. Where Carlyle initiated certain lines of attack, Ruskin and Morris were able to carry them forward into the practical realm of everyday living.

The vision of what Morris hoped England might become is stated briefly by the guest in News from Nowhere:

> . . . [M]y heart swelled with joy as I thought of all the beautiful grey villages . . . all peopled now with this happy and lovely folk, who had cast away riches and attained to wealth. (200)

Does this vision seem a far cry from Carlyle's vehement exhortations to higher moral standards of living? We shall attempt to show how Morris's vision is a direct outcome of Carlyle's philosophy, as moulded into form first by Ruskin and then by Morris. To do this, we shall explore briefly three controversial areas of nineteenth-century life: industrial civilization, political and social economy, and the theory of the perfectibility of man.

1. Industrial Civilization

Carlyle brought to the fore the "Condition-of-England" question, which was to occupy the attention of leading thinkers of the century. He viewed with disgust the prevailing "Mammonism", and, although he did

not repudiate industrialism, he condemned the commercial ideas which supported it and warped the lives of the workers. He deplored the "nexus of Cash-payment" which had become the sole relationship of man to man.[20] What was needed to establish right relationships between men was, according to Carlyle, a realization of moral duty or responsibility on the part of all[21] people, a responsibility to work "while it is called Today; for the Night cometh when no man can work."[22] Whether man derived pleasure in work was beside the point; work of itself was worthwhile and essential to the expansion of man's soul. Even the drudgery of machine-labor was acceptable, provided it was productive and fulfilled a moral purpose. Carlyle's gospel of labor and his proposed reward, "Fair day's-wages for a fair day's work",[23] lent an added significance to the worth of individual man, even of the lowest class, which was to have far-reaching consequences in the later part of the century. Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, and Shaw all contribute to the idea that faith may be rediscovered through work.

Ruskin, on the other hand, condemned the whole industrial system and the evils inherent in it. He objected to the division of labour which machine-work entailed, because each man performed one detail of work and was unaware of its significance to the complete task being performed. This type of work therefore fragmented men and took from them the enjoyment which is "the divine solace of human labour." With no pleasure in work they looked to riches as the only source of enjoyment. Ruskin objected to the "shoddy, sham, makeshift"

work that was being produced, to the manufacture of unnecessary articles merely fromprofit-motive, to exact finish for its own sake, and to ugliness and imitation, as destructive of the soul of man in labour. Therefore he advocated as much abolition of machinery as possible.[24] The evils of industrialism, he said, "can be met only by a right understanding, on the part of all classes, of what kinds of labour are good for men, raising them, and making them happy; by a determined sacrifice of such convenience, or beauty, or cheapness as is to be got only by the degradation of the workman; and by equally determined demand for the products and results of healthy and ennobling labor."[25] Employment thus was to be a means to a better and happier life. The idea that there is no wealth but life is the basis of Ruskin's social theory. Whereas Carlyle is concerned with the productivity of labor and the ethics of labor relationships, Ruskin's concern is with the intrinsic nature of the work, the capacity of the workers, and the distribution of work.[26] The intrinsic nature of work involves the aesthetic element in it which Ruskin examined so closely in "On the Nature of Gothic" and regarded as of major importance to the social welfare of the workers.

In the personal activities of Morris, no less than in his essays, poems and tales, especially in News from Nowhere, may be found abundant proof that Morris gave practical application to Ruskin's theories, and incidentally to some of Carlyle's, regarding industrialism. He enriched his own life and that of others by actively engaging

in many handicraft skills which occupied his time and attention, not because he needed to make a living, but because he loved to work creatively with his hands. His activities at the vats, the looms, and the printing press were practical applications of Carlyle's admonition to Work and to Produce. However the pleasure and the freedom he enjoyed in his work were the incentives, not Carlyle's strict adherence to duty. Morris hoped that eventually the enjoyment of handicrafts and creative labour would cause an abolition of almost all machine-labor. He points out in News from Nowhere the trend he hopes labour will take:

> . . .[W]ork that was pleasure began to push out the mechanical toil . . . machine after machine was quietly dropped under the excuse that the machines could not produce works of art, and that works of art were more and more called for. (179)

As for the ultimate reward of labour, instead of "a fair day's-wage", Morris states, through Hammond, that "[t]he reward of labour is life" (91).

2. Political Economy

To achieve such "life", or as Ruskin called it "wealth", the country must have a sound system of political economy. Let us examine at this point some of the suggested political reforms of Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris to determine the extent to which Morris developed his theories from Carlyle and Ruskin.

Carlyle views society as wicked and in need of individualistic and paternalistic reforms. "By degrees," so Carlyle expressed his hope, "we shall again have a Society with something of Heroism in it,

something of Heaven's Blessing on it. . . ."[27] He deplores the inactivity and neglect of the government operating under a "laissez-faire" policy[28] and views the parliamentary system with some suspicion. He thought government, however, a necessary part of the whole society as "the outward skin of the Body Politic, holding the whole together and protecting it. . . ."[29] Legislative interference is indispensable as a check on the lawless anarchy of market wages and supply-and-demand. Fearing democracy, he condemns universal suffrage and democracy as synonymous with anarchy.[30] Instead he calls for "heroes" to rise up and lead the country as an "aristocracy of talent" into the paths of Wisdom.[31] And what is his goal? He puts it thus: "Hero-kings, and a whole world not unheroic"[32] through individual reform - "a total change of regimen, change of constitution and existence from the very centre of it; a new body to be got, with resuscitated soul. . . ."[33] How very like Carlyle Morris sounds when he speaks of a rebirth for society! Having described the existing system, he says, "This is the system which we seek to overthrow and supplant by one in which labour will no longer be a burden."[34] But Carlyle's route is paternalistic and individualistic - a "socialism of responsibility, hierarchically administered."[35]

Ruskin, the "Tory of the old school" he claimed to be, also condemns democracy. Like Carlyle, he is a strict authoritarian and fears democracy. He denounces the anarchy of "laissez-faire" and advocates considerable extension of state activity and control. Government, however, must maintain authority over the people, and

parliament must maintain authority in a centralized, somewhat paternalistic body, its duties to pass reforms concerning hours of labor, rates of pay, security of tenure, etc., so as to attain the ultimate goal expressed in Unto This Last, "the greatest number of noble and happy human beings".[36] The real science of political economy, he states, "is that which teaches nations to desire and labour for the things that lead to life; and to scorn and destroy the things that lead to destruction."[37] His utopian vision is expressed perhaps most effectively and succinctly in Lecture Two of The Crown of Wild Olive :

> But if you can fix some conception of a true human state of life to be striven for - life, good for all men, as for yourselves; if you can determine some honest and simple order of existence; following those trodden ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness, and seeking her quiet and withdrawn paths, which are peace; - then, and so sanctifying wealth into "commonwealth", all your art, your literature, your daily labors, your domestic affection, and citizens duty, will join and increase into one magnificent harmony. You will know then how to build, well enough; you will build with stone well, but with flesh better; temples not made with hands, but riveted of hearts; and that kind of marble, crimson-veined, is indeed eternal. 38

The structure of Ruskinian thought has the structure of eternity.[39] So, too, Morris's aspiration for the future of England is a magnificent, harmonious "commonwealth", a co-ordination of all that is good for mankind! But Ruskin's utopianism, unhappily shall we say, went the way of scattered communities operating by means of state control.

As the concern for the masses continued to grow, however,

there was a gradual transition from oligarchic to democratic representation. Morris's greater love for humanity[40] sought an extension of Ruskin's theories so as to include equality as the true foundation of an ideal social structure. This equality was to be aimed at the economic goal of abolition of private property. Morris maintained that land and all those things used for the reproduction of wealth should be owned by the whole community for the benefit of all. He did not believe in the existing class structure because real co-operation and fellowship could not then exist. This is Morris's major difference from Carlyle and Ruskin. Though he feared anarchism because it might destroy the freedom of the people, he pressed strongly for a total re-establishment of society on an altogether different basis. Democracy, as understood generally, was not part of Morris's plan for the future, because, he said, it is an "artificial system" in which a person's wealth, acquired within the artificial system is artificially protected by the system of authority.[41] But a much truer democracy, based on equality, freedom, and an absence of rigid parliamentary laws would exist in Morris's future state. Each adult would participate directly and equally in the affairs of the local commune. Morris opposed Parliament because it supported the social structure which Socialists were working so hard to destroy. Nor was parliament a truly democratic device because it was "quite immovable towards any real change in social and economical matters."[42] As for the Tories, he could see

no affinity between Land Nationalization and the Tory cause.[43] As far as social laws were concerned they were merely a "piecemeal" way of dealing with matters which, Morris felt, needed a total reorganization, although he admitted that State Socialism might be necessary as a transitional step during the process of a change-over to a full Socialistic system. Though Ruskin was socialistic in the spirit and tendency of many of his reforms, he lacked the practical point of view of the manufacturer, politician, and social reformer that Morris had become. Ruskin had proposed in Fors Clavigera "a network of utopian communities in which life was to be very like that described in News from Nowhere."[44] But it remained for Morris to give the vitalizing power to a utopia by basing it on universal and democratic equality, so essential to real fellowship and freedom.[45] Such an equality was to be all inclusive, of social, economic and political consequence, an equality of condition based on the abolition of private property. People would be conscious of living in one corporate body and would live and work in free co-operation, each for all and all for each, with no class distinction to disrupt the harmony.[46]

3. The Perfectibility of Man

The basis of most of our utopian thought is "faith in what man may become".[47] Judged by this standard, all three men are definitely utopists, differing only in degree.

Carlyle sees in man the same dualistic character he saw in

the world: each is in a state of "becoming", or a process of continual change. As the world is ever being destroyed and created anew (Carlyle used the symbol of the Phoenix as an apt illustration), so man is continually reborn so as to fulfill his responsibility to God and his fellowmen. Man's problem therefore becomes one of conduct, of how to obey the Laws of the Universe, the Laws of Religion:

> . . .[R]eligion now is; its Laws, written if not on stone tables, yet on the Azure of Infinitude, in the inner heart of God's creation, certain as Life, certain as Death! I say the Laws are there, and thou shalt not disobey them. 48

His plea to the Mammon-worshippers of the industrial age was to find their souls, to seek a reawakening of themselves from within, so as to develop heroic qualities of character and noble action:

> But it is to you, ye Workers, who do already work, and are as grown men, noble and honourable in a sort, that the whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom. 49

His belief that man possesses untold possibilities for good, his emphasis on spiritual and immaterial values, his faith in the innate qualities of leadership within human nature had far-reaching effects on succeeding generations,[50] and, apropos of our study, on Ruskin and Morris, particularly on <u>News from Nowhere</u>.

Ruskin's concern was mainly <u>how</u> to develop men into the type of Christian, moral human beings that Carlyle thought them. His attack was levelled, not so much toward the individual, as toward the

social, collective group. To him the social order was both wicked and ugly, and a change in production necessary so as to abolish the immoral practices which accompanied the principle of competition. Instead of the motto "Defraud your neighbour", he advocated, "Love your neighbour as yourself." To cultivate justice and truth in man, education must be primarily ethical, aimed at morality and right living.

> [T]he entire object of true education is to make people not merely do the right things: - not merely industrious, but to love industry - not merely learned, but to love knowledge - not merely pure, but to love purity - not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice. 51

He proposed that political economy take into account social affection[52] and become the 'science' that teaches nations to desire and work for the good life.[53] Thus Ruskin related social theory to economic theory and practice in order that England might attain to true 'Wealth' - the production of "Happy-hearted creatures" with "Souls of good quality",[54] but he realized that this 'wealth' can be attained only if society has reached a sufficiently high moral level.[55] Furthermore, the development of the "whole" man requires not only ethical standards of living but also an appreciation of the beautiful. The arts and social affairs of man must therefore be interrelated. For Ruskin's argument was that art is essentially moral and the right practice of art a sort of religion. This emphasis on aesthetic values was his addition to the ethical philosophy of Carlyle.

In Modern Painters Ruskin analyzed rather closely the relation between the kind of beauty men perceive in nature and the moral quality

of their lives. Although his original intention in his careful studies of nature was scientific realism, he arrived at certain conclusions[56] which eventually were to lead him into the field of social reform. He concluded that nature is never independent of associated thought, and though it inspires awe and melancholy, its principal influence is exhilarating and gladdening. Nature, moreover, is inconsistent with evil feeling but associated "with every just and noble sorrow, joy or affection." Though a continual perception of Sanctity is inspired by the whole of nature, there is no definite religious feeling mingled with it, only a feeling of awe and delight as if some spirit were present. Ruskin concluded that these feelings inspired by Nature have power in moulding character and forming temperament, but they do not instil principles. He pointed out that a relation exists between the kind of beauty one sees and the moral quality of his life. This careful analysis is a contrast to Wordsworth's view that Nature, as God's work, is a direct communication between God and man and as such is a sort of moral teacher. But does the perception of beauty in nature produce virtue? In his more careful analysis and more mature reasoning, Ruskin concluded that beauty produces perhaps only right attitudes, that the perception of beauty in art or nature is merely connected to what is right in human action.

> Before you can have a happy, virtuous population, you need a solid religious foundation, you need healthful, prosperous living conditions, and you need education, culture, and art. Without all of these things, the actual value of the landscape feeling is negligible. 57

Morris, on the other hand, although maintaining certain inclinations and tendencies from his early theological training, declared himself a pagan[58] and advocated a religion of humanity. Like Carlyle and Ruskin, he valued highly the moral qualities of justice, truth, sincerity, industry, but he stressed their social value in a communal type of existence as well as their worth to the individual. Carlyle's emphasis was on a spiritual reawakening, individual morality and social duty; Ruskin's emphasis, also dualistic, was on "Right doing" towards one's fellowmen as a result of education, religion, and art; Morris's was on a social morality, based on a sense of responsibility to one another as social human beings, exclusive of theological considerations.

The innate evil in human nature,[59] he believed, exists along with the good, and would hinder the achievement of perfect fellowship of human beings, for a time. Eventually men, nurtured in the mother-bosom of Nature and acting in deference to one another, could cultivate virtue by finding the "goodness" of nature round about them and in themselves.[60] Carlyle's Nature as "a symbol of God," became for Morris a symbol of "goodness" a harmonious co-operation with man for the production of all that man requires. The laws of the universe became merely a set of practical influences which would, if allowed, increase the happiness and well-being of humankind. Man's search for a soul has become "a Socratic search for the good".[61] Religion and law, as understood generally, are dispensed

with because they are unnecessary in a Fellowship where the relations of men are governed by love and harmony.[62] But he limits the spiritual instincts of human nature - that aspect of living which had pervaded the life of the mediaevals and given purpose to their whole existence. To Morris the creative activity of man in pleasant natural surroundings and the happy communion with fellowmen satisfy such instincts. Such is the fellowship Morris depicts in News from Nowhere. His was not, however, a purely ethical society but largely an aesthetic one. Like Ruskin, Morris wanted the development of the "whole man" in a simple, natural environment through limitation of wants, joy in creative labour, and delight in life. The old man remarks in News from Nowhere:

> . . .[W]e pass our lives in reasonable strife with nature, exercising not one side of ourselves only, but all sides, taking the keenest pleasure in all the life of the world. So it is a point of honour with us not to be self-centred; not to suppose that the world must cease because one man is sorry . . . [this latter in reference to matters of sentiment. He adds]. . . we have cast off some of the follies of the older world. (58)

Though man exists primarily in the social context, his individuality is marvelously preserved. The change Morris recommended would involve (in his terms) "the very noblest ideal of human life and duty: a life in which every human being should find unrestricted scope for his best powers and faculties."[63] His demand that compulsion be eliminated in favour of freedom, and class differences and private property be abolished in favour of equality, indicate that, above all, Morris had infinite faith in human nature and almost boundless love for his fellow men. Reflected in his romances, essays, utopias -

in fact, in his whole life's work - is that faith in humanity and love for the common people which led his friend, J. Bruce Glasier, to remark thus:

> With Ruskin the people are always You;
> with Carlyle they are even farther away, they are They;
> but with Morris the people are always We. 64

Morris's utopia, if it had been carried into practice, would have been the ultimate step in the long battle of the nineteenth century for "the humanization of man in society".[65] A battle of ideas had been waged, as we have seen, in the areas of industrialism, government, and personal development. Carlyle drew attention to weaknesses within the industrial system - the disproportion between work and wages and the faulty relations between men and masters. It remained for Ruskin and then Morris to delve more deeply into civilization's wrongs, and for the latter eventually to repudiate the whole industrial system and both to repudiate the machine labour which was degrading the worker. All three, in turn, raised objection to the 'laissez-faire' policy of government, Ruskin advocating considerable state interference, and Morris total interference which involved a whole reorganization of government on a different basis entirely. Carlyle's remedy consisted of higher ethical ideals and right action; Ruskin's fusion of aesthetics with the ethics of Carlyle was intended to increase the range of mankind's happiness; Morris's additions to the aesthetico-ethical doctrine of Ruskin were the principles of freedom and equality necessary for a greater degree of fellowship, which means the duty of man to his neighbour.

Thus the "Phoenix-image" of a new society arising from the ashes (outworn conceptions, institutions, etc.) of the old world became, in the mind of Ruskin, a state_controlled society, socialistic in spirit and tendency and finally, in Morris, a fully socialistic system. Holbrook Jackson points out that Morris gave the theory of Ruskin "a professional and practical application which the Master could not attain."[66]

D. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

To explain most effectively the role of Pre-Raphaelitism in the life of William Morris, I shall attempt first to dispel the generally vague notions about the movement, and then indicate the extent to which it affected his work. This section is therefore divided into two parts: namely, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement itself, and its influence on Morris, particularly in News from Nowhere.

1.

About midcentury, the task of assimilating the tremendous changes brought about by industrialism and mechanization had upset the balance of life. In 1848, the year of general revolt,[67] the artist became more concerned about what was happening in the nineteenth-century environment. In the quest for a more significant role in society, a group of artists - headed by William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti - organized what became known as the "P.R.B.", or Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. "Pre-Raphaelite" referred to an admiration for the qualities of early Italian-Florentine painting, sweetness, depth, sincerity, devotional feeling, self-forgetfulness, and humble adherence to truth.[68]

Though Pre-Raphaelitism was, in effect, a late flowering of the Romantic Movement, it also sprang from an interest in medievalism and the Oxford Movement, and more immediately from John Ruskin's revolutionary criticism of the visual arts in Modern Painters. The protest was against art that had bogged down in Academicism, which F.G. Stephens, an adherent of the enlarged company of Pre-Raphaelites, described as the "winter" of the arts - "exaggerated action, conventionalism, gaudy colour, false sentiment, voluptuousness, and poverty of invention." [69] He declared that "it is by truth alone that the Arts can ever hold the position for which they were intended, as the most powerful instruments, the most gentle guides. . . ." [70]

In their search for truth, the Pre-Raphaelites turned primarily to nature. By attempting to interpret to man the beauty of the world in its natural form, they were following the practice of the early Italian painters who portrayed nature with fidelity to detail. Their paintings were not, however, photographic reproductions but lively impressions of the artists' thought-processes acted upon by natural stimuli. In following this principle of a return to nature, Holman Hunt, for example, spent years in Palestine in order to portray the setting in exact detail for his religious paintings of the life of Christ. In his remarkable painting, "The Scape Goat",[71] he depicted nature as uncorrupted, in contrast to the corruption to be found within human nature. His practice accorded with the general Pre-Raphaelite idea, that it is only "the factitious matter" grafted on nature by "the vice of fashion, evil hearts, and infamous desires"

that must be removed.[72] The Pre-Raphaelite artists were therefore not mere realists, painting the details of nature according to scientific fact.

They believed that the frank worship of nature must be "kept in check by selection and directed by the spirit of imaginative purpose."[73] The purpose of Holman Hunt's travels in Palestine was to present the idea, as far as his paintings could, that Christianity is a living faith,[74] and that its claims are so momentous that they cannot be trifled with, even in the nineteenth century.[75] By means of allegory and symbolism the Pre-Raphaelites attempted to restore to nineteenth-century life a harmony which modern life seemed to have lost. Hunt and Millais presented ideas by means of symbols which were derived from reflection; for example, the bat depicted in Hunt's "The Light of the World" is a symbol of ignorance,[76] and the dove in Millais' "Christ in the Home of his Parents"[77] foreshadows the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In contrast, Rossetti developed medieval symbolism according to "theologically sacramental, cosmological, and courtly love conventions."[78] Though symbols should be used to clarify some truth, the significance of Pre-Raphaelite symbolism with its various levels of meaning[79] was often lost to the nineteenth-century viewer, and Pre-Raphaelites occasionally followed the practice of appending a poem or prose comment to their paintings.[80] In this way they stressed the affinity between painting and writing; their painting became very literary, and their writing became very pictorial. By

borrowing symbols from earlier days, the Pre-Raphaelites attempted to portray modern life "as having an equivalent spiritual and human significance to that which medieval life had in all its details . . . ."[81]

In addition to the "return to nature" and "the presentment of incident", a third aspect of Pre-Raphaelitism was a decorative or ornamental quality, which aimed at a "definite, harmonious conscious beauty."[82] In the sordid, drab environment of mid-century industrialism, artists found this quality difficult to achieve in a true and right balance. The rather ascetic Holman Hunt tended to treat the decorative aspect rather perfunctorily,[83] because he kept the deep didactic function of art ever before him: "All art from the beginning served for the higher development of men's minds. It has ever been valued as food to sustain strength for noble resolves, not as that devoured by epicures only to surfeit the palate."[84] Danger lay in the other extreme - too great an absorption in archaic patterns and forms, too much emphasis on romance and beauty; in short, too little presentment of thought in simple, unaffected expression.

The "escapist" tendency was perhaps strongest in the medievalist[85] Pre-Raphaelite, Rossetti: he tended, except in "Jenny", eventually to draw art away from "a firm attachment to truth" and into a world of sensuality. Holman Hunt opposed his "servile medievalism"[86] and accused him of not ever grasping Pre-Raphaelitism and of "fostering much of the suspicion and enmity" at the outset of the Movement.[87] There is, however, immense imaginative strength in his poetry and

painting[88] and imaginative boldness in his attempting to fuse those two arts.[89] But his subjective mysticism weakened the link between art and society that other Pre-Raphaelites were intent on strengthening, and his aesthetic imagination was quite distant from modern industrial life.[90] A discrepancy was evident between the splendour of the poetic word and the daily growing squalor of men.[91] The Gothicism that developed as one aspect of the movement seems to be a part of the retreat from real life which is a reproach to the Pre-Raphaelite School. Instead of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, except for Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites later tended to exclude the vexing and irritating problems of life and to withdraw into pantheism, medievalism, amorality, and the world of the imagination, whatever suited each individual temperament.[92] Though much of the Pre-Raphaelite literature has intrinsic merit, it generally typifies the excessive devotion to beauty which resulted in a too-decorative use of language, "a beauty overgarnished". G.M. Young justly remarks that "the Pre-Raphaelites struck out for a freedom which they had not strength to reach."[93]

2.

Morris was ideally suited just after the mid-century to become allied with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. He possessed a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, a religious background, and a fine moral sense. Though he was still in his most impressionable years, he had developed a dissatisfaction with the drabness of life in industrial England and a preference for the more colourful, simple, and

sincere life of the Middle Ages. In his first years with the Movement his friend Rossetti kept his "prodigious impetuosity" down and imparted to him "a clear vision of a romantic ideal."[94] He eventually developed the ability to make the people see the difference between the kind of beauty the Pre-Raphaelites saw and the ugliness commonly preferred. In News from Nowhere, written near the end of his life, Morris creates a utopia which has been directed to a great extent by Pre-Raphaelite ideals and influences. He observes the guiding principle of naturalism which is evident in the fidelity with which nature is depicted. In News from Nowhere Morris describes "the light mist curling up from the river till the sun gain s power to draw it away . . . the bleak speckling the water under the willowboughs . . . the tiny flies . . . falling in myriads . . . the great chub splashing here and there . . . ." There is a "back-to-Nature" movement of the people, a reassertion of the right and proper use of the resources of nature, and an attitude that nature is chaste and clean and productive of virtue in proportion as her children live in close communion with her. Morris describes England as "now a garden, where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt, with the necessary dwellings, sheds, and workshops scattered up and down the country, all trim and neat and prefty" (p. 72). Though often he remarks on the beauties of nature - trees, flowers, water -[95] his emphasis is, as Rossetti's was, on the qualities of human nature, which Morris suggests evolve from close contact with nature. These are the qualities of sincerity, humility, originality, and a love for truth.[96]

Such a "healthy condition of the mind and body", as Kalon remarks in "A Dialogue on Art", "is, after, all, the happy life . . . its delights, amusements, and occupations . . . are innocent and chaste." [97] In News from Nowhere Dick illustrates a healthy delight in nature when he comments thus:

> [T]he whole Thames-side is a park this time of the year; and for my part, I had rather lie under an elm tree on the borders of a wheat-field, with the bees humming about me and the corn-crake crying from furrow to furrow, than in any park in England." (p. 145)

There is a total lack of artificiality, imitation, and subterfuge in the characters, most noticeable in the pleasant and charming personality of Ellen. A marked affinity exists, it seems to me, between Hunt's painting, "The Awakened Conscience", [98] and the description of human nature in News from Nowhere, in which the visual details of nature itself are subordinated to the qualities that human nature may possess in a wholesome natural environment.

The "presentment of idea" controls the purpose of News from Nowhere because it was written primarily as socialist propaganda. In artistic expression, nurtured by the love of nature, man can achieve "the good life", a life of happiness for the greatest number. Morris's insistence on art as the channel through which life may be revitalized is unmistakable throughout his utopia, art being the foundation on which his whole concept of future England is built. The people are wholehearted in their enjoyment of the arts and crafts of life—carving, weaving, sculpture, masonry, road-mending, thatching, pottery and glass-

making - of such is their happiness built! Holman Hunt has stated, "The degradation of art is nothing less than a sign of disease in Society."[99] This is the same view of art which led to socialism in the case of William Morris, and will be explained at length in Chapter II.

In the area of decoration Morris was able to make his most valuable contribution to Pre-Raphaelitism. After trying his hand at painting, he turned to the decorative skills, on the suggestion of Rossetti, and demonstrated a real talent for representing natural forms in stylized designs.[100] Rossetti praised his decorative work highly: "In all illumination and work of that kind he is quite unrivalled by anything modern that I know - Ruskin says, better than anything ancient."[101] His wall-papers, embroideries, tapestries, carpets, illuminations of later days, after his Firm had been established, were of high artistic quality. Though church decoration was the first business of the Firm, designing of furniture and utensils - the lesser arts and crafts - became "the proper work of artists themselves."[102] Thus the aestheticism of Rossetti took a more practical turn in the case of William Morris. He was determined to contribute beauty and pleasure[103] to drab nineteenth-century existence through beautiful articles for everyday use. The emphasis in News from Nowhere on such practical aesthetics [104] may be illustrated by the following extracts: for example, in the words of Dick: "Am I not quite contented so long as you let me do a little practical aesthetics with my gold and steel, and the blowpipe and the nice little hammer" (20); by descriptions of

the river craft, "bright green, and painted over with elegantly drawn flowers" (180), and of the pipe of hardwood carved "very elaborately" and "mounted in gold sprinkled with little gems" (p.37); and by the frequent mention of embroidered clothing, for example, the surcoat of Boffin, the dustman, "embroidered most copiously as well as elegantly, so that the sun flashed back from him as if he had been clad in golden armour" (20-21). Such "particularization" of beauties is definitely "Pre-Raphaelite" in inspiration and lends a pictorial and emotional effect to the cloth of utopian life that Morris has woven. The visual details, the glowing colors, the animated figures, like those in illuminated missals or in finely woven tapestries, are Pre-Raphaelite contributions to the work of William Morris, and as such will be examined more closely in Chapter Four.

One can occasionally sense in the aestheticism of Morris an exaggeration of, or an over-indulgence in beauty. Although Elton admits that Morris's works have the spirit of beauty moving through them,[105] he remarks perhaps justly that "there <u>is</u> something affected about the Pre-Raphaelites - about Rossetti and about Swinburne, and even about Morris - when they start to talk of 'beauty'. . . ."[106] Having broken his friendship with Rossetti, who had been of greatest influence on him, Morris was saved from too great a sensuality[107] by his concern for the condition of his country. England needed a popular art, not an esoteric one as so much of Pre-Raphaelite art had been. Morris was led away from the indulgent atmosphere of the fine arts by Ruskin,

whose influence, together with that of Carlyle's, was examined in the last section. George Bernard Shaw summed up Morris's evolution as follows:

> He had escaped middle age, passing quite suddenly from a circle of artistic revolutionists, mostly university men gone Agnostic or Bohemian or both, who knew all about him and saw him as much younger and less important than he really was, into a proletarian movement in which, so far as he was known at all, he was venerated as an Elder. 108

Chapter II

FROM ART TO SOCIALISM

A. The Aestheticism of the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages held a very strong appeal for nineteenth-century England,[1] and not least of all for William Morris. In his early years he learned to love the medieval houses and churches of his Essex environment. At the age of eight he and his father visited Canterbury, where the glory of Gothic architecture impressed him greatly. In adolescence he made a detailed study of the architecture of medieval churches. Later, when he was a student at Oxford, a university still somewhat permeated with the effects of the Oxford Movement and its interest in medievalism, he again had an opportunity to explore the Middle Ages and to acquire some of his life-long "medieval idiosyncrasies".[2] As soon as he left school he traveled with his friend, Burne-Jones,[3] on foot throughout France and visited the Gothic remains at Rouen[4], Amiens, Chartres.

It is little wonder that, when a "restoration" of old buildings began, later in the century, Morris swung into active revolt with an "Anti-Scrape" campaign against such destruction of Gothic structures. He deplored the attempt to "restore" Gothic architecture, the spirit of which was entirely lacking in workmen of the nineteenth-century, whose lives were characterized by a "parsimony of oppression", which was in sharp contrast to the lives of their prototypes of the Middle Ages.[5] Ellen

points out this difference between workmen of the nineteenth century and those of the Middle Ages when she says in News from Nowhere that it "takes time and leisure, and minds not overburdened with care, to make beautiful dwellings . . . ."(192) If this be true, no wonder the nineteenth-century worker, harassed by a multitude of cares, was incapable of restoring Gothic architecture! The relationship between the life of the worker and the product of his hands is the focal point of much of the later discussion in this chapter.

Long before Morris had seen any connection between art and socialism, he was enthusiastic about the medieval arts and crafts and wished to recapture them for nineteenth-century England.[6] He saw that they were of tremendous importance to the lives of the handicraftsmen, for the harmonious co-operation gave each one solace in his work, freed him in soul, and gave him pleasure. These aspects of joy in one's work, fellowship with one's co-workers, and the artisan's love of his craft were eventually to be appropriated as foundation stones of Morris's socialistic theory. The Story of the Unknown Church[7], written during his student days, and telling of a medieval mason-carver and his creative effort, shows Morris's longing for an artisan's paradise. His own practice of the crafts of the medieval worker - dyeing, weaving, illumination - was his attempt to pick up the threads of a lost tradition which he felt held untold possibilities for the happiness of mankind. How keenly he believed in a medieval artisan's type of life is reflected throughout News

from Nowhere: in the inclusion of handicrafts such as weaving and carving, in the descriptions of market carts, quaint stone bridges, "banded workshops", and in the organization of life into motes, villages, workgroups, in fact, in the whole, communal existence of the people, free from all the constraining commercialism of Morris's day. Pervading all was the spirit of fellowship which Morris wished to salvage from the medieval world and preserve in the future one, a fellowship which was at the center of his own nature. Hammond verifies this when he says in News from Nowhere, "More akin to our way of looking at life was the spirit of the Middle Ages, to whom heaven and the life of the next world was such a reality, that it became to them a part of the life upon the earth . . ." (132).

The idea of God's kingdom on earth, an earthly paradise, had early taken hold of Morris's mind, as it had of all men's minds in the early Middle Ages.[8] The Earthly Paradise (1867),[9] modelled on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and permeated with a medieval atmosphere, first reveals Morris's dissatisfaction with social conditions of his day and his longing for a utopian existence. Certain of his prose romances, especially A Dream of John Ball,[10] based on the story of the Peasants' Revolt, shows the spirit of medieval leaders like Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball, who "dar ed to be before their time."[11] Morris discerned in the Revolt an effort on the part of workers to exercise power over the ruling class in order to establish God's kingdom on earth. He admired the progressive spirit of the association of workers and

their feeling of fellowship within the boundaries of the guilds. Such associations of workers, happily employed in creative activity, are found in News from Nowhere because Morris believed that the true roots of democracy go back to the medieval guilds. Glimpses of a medieval earthly paradise occur in the prose romances; for example, in the land that Halblithe found in The Story of the Glittering Plain with its idyllic setting, leisure, and comradeship, and in Burgdale in The Roots of the Mountains, where love and fellowship[12] characterize the tribal life of the Sons of Wolf. "The vision changes in detail from work to work," says Jackson, "But it never loses its integrity, and finally in News from Nowhere (1891), he [Morris] extends it into a complete social system fit for a William Morris to live in."[13]

In summary, Morris's idealization of the Middle Ages was based most generally on the aesthetic life of the people and their love of fellowship. He did not, however, wish civilization to return to the Middle Ages, but to pick up only those threads which were worthy and to weave from them a new fabric of utopian English life. For he was aware of the inequalities that existed in the feudal system and the ignorance and superstition of the period.[14] But he believed that "the new art will come to birth amidst the handicrafts: that the longing of simple people will take up the chain where it fell from the hands of the craft-guilds of the fifteenth century, and that the academical art which was developed from that misreading of history which we call the Renaissance, will prove a barren stem. . . ."[15]

Morris's idealization of the Middle Ages is largely a result of his own temperament and education, but it becomes also the basis from which he consistently criticizes his own age and arrives at a solution for nineteenth-century problems.

B. "On the Nature of Gothic"

It is extremely doubtful that Morris could have formulated alone a philosophy of art of such far-reaching consequences as that contained in News from Nowhere had not Ruskin paved the way for him. In fact, Morris frequently reiterates in almost the same words the basic principles that Ruskin laid down in his powerful chapter "The Nature of Gothic" in Book Two of The Stones of Venice. As we have already traced the influence that Ruskin exerted on Morris in other fields, there remains yet the vastly important area of the philosophy of art to be examined. It was in this area that Ruskin's thought found its most fertile soil in the mind of Morris. It was this set of ideas that carried Morris into the vast field of social and political reform from which News from Nowhere sprang.

Just how Ruskin's philosophy of art combined with Morris's early interest in the Middle Ages and became the socialism of News from Nowhere is the interesting subject with which this section deals. We shall see that in the famous chapter "On the Nature of Gothic", Ruskin frames the main fabric of Morris's Socialism.

The importance of "The Nature of Gothic" (1853) lies not so much therefore in an analysis of Gothic architecture itself as in the

analysis of the relationship of such art to the whole life of the people who produced it. It traces the roots of art to the social system of the workers and thus shifts attention from the works of art to the lives of the men who produced such structures. The analysis of "Gothic" goes to the very root of the matter in tracing the relation between the quality of work and the quality of life, a study which was destined to have far-reaching political and social consequences.[16a] Professor Mackail remarks in his biography of William Morris that "On the Nature of Gothic" "set fire to his [Morris's] enthusiasm and kindled the belief of his whole life."[16b] Morris himself attested to the lasting impression it made:

> To some of us when we first read it, now many years ago, it seemed to point out a new read on which the world should travel. 17

It beckoned Morris down the road to Socialism and became at length the main source of News from Nowhere, Morris's utopian dream of a possible future world. All other sociological books of John Ruskin proved merely extensions of the fundamental principles laid down in "On the Nature of Gothic."[18]

As Ruskin contemplated the external elements of Gothic architecture,[19] he realized that the builders had expressed in their work certain mental tendencies[20] which lent power and life to the structure. He saw a degree of sternness and rudeness expressed in wildness of thought and roughness of work, an "index of the climate and religious principle" of the Goths. The individual workers were not

guilty of servile ornament[21] but had expressed the thoughtful part of themselves, whatever faults they might have and whatever errors they might make. In the "ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid",[22] he saw signs of the life and liberty of the workmen and a freedom of thought which was lacking in nineteenth-century work.

The pinched and sordid lives of the workers of Ruskin's day were a direct result of the industrial system which had all but quenched the worker's freedom and individuality. The degradation of the operative into a machine, according to Ruskin, was "leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves."[23] The outcry against wealth and against nobility was growing stronger, the upper classes were hated by the lower, and the foundations of society were shaken, as the worker cried out for some satisfaction in his work.

> But to feel their souls withering within them, unthanked, to find their whole being sunk into an unrecognized abyss, to be counted off into a heap of mechanism numbered with its wheels, and weighed with its hammer strokes - this nature bade not, - this God blesses not, - this humanity for no long time is able to endure. 24

In the chapter "On the Nature of Gothic" Ruskin attacks most vehemently the division of labour which characterizes industrial work. He fears that, not only work, but men themselves are divided up into fragments to such an extent that the capacity for personal expression

is exhausted in some minute, exacting, monotonous routine. Their personal integrity is destroyed, their personality thwarted.

> And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this, - that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages. 25

Such a degradation of the workman's position needs to be met, said Ruskin, by a right understanding of what kinds of labour are good for men, and by a demand for products and results of healthy and ennobling labour. Three broad and simple rules need to be observed: never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which Invention has no share, never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end, and never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works.[26] The important principle is to encourage, not slaves' work, but the expression of the whole personality of the worker in the manufacture of the products being bought. One man's thoughts should not be executed by another man's hands; manual labour governed by intellect is never degrading.[27] Ruskin concluded from his study of Gothic that labour and thought are inseparable, the one supporting the other and both resulting in health and happiness to the worker.[28]

"Gothic", therefore, is not only a noble character of Christian architecture but an essential one. Paradoxically, however, it must needs be an imperfect architecture because to banish imperfection is

to paralyze the vitality of the workman. A relentless requiring of perfection is, according to Ruskin, a sign of the misunderstanding of the ends of art,[29] and, incidentally, the first cause of the fall of the arts of Europe.[30] The law of human life must be Effort, not Perfection, the law of judgment, Mercy. Hence, "the strange disquietude of the Gothic spirit," its capability of "perpetual novelty", "the prickly independence and frosty fortitude" which characterize Gothic Architecture, its "independence of character, resoluteness of purpose", "its Protestant spirit of self-dependence and inquiry", "its magnificent enthusiasm". All of these are elements of the inner spirit which Ruskin admired, and found entirely lacking in the work of his day.

Ruskin was certainly not the first person to give the arts a moral function. His concern was, however, essentially moral and in the moral inter-relation of art and society. Because of his freedom to express himself, the Gothic builder looked to nature round about him for his material. In his desire to give pleasure through truth and composition, he balanced fact and design so as to create a harmonious whole. Guided by his love of natural objects for their own sake, he tended to represent them "unconstrained by artistical laws",[31a] and added a little more nature to his design than had been common in the Southern Byzantine. Ruskin insisted on "personal vision of fact", a direct perception of the beauties in nature as the basis for art. This Naturalism, then, depends on the delicacy of perception of an

artist, which is related to the degree to which his senses have been educated, and these in turn depend on his moral life. As the whole man participates in producing a work of art, his senses, emotions, and moral life are connected, and his art becomes an exponent of his "goodness". "Only good men", said Ruskin, "can produce good art."[31b]

There are certain broad outlines of Ruskin's system of aesthetics, especially as it pertains to nature, that are significant because they lead into his social views. He divided Ideas of Beauty into two kinds: those beauties of inanimate nature (Typical Beauty), illustrative of attributes of God, and those of plants and animals (Vital Beauty). The true perception of these kinds of beauty is vested in a moral faculty (Theoria), which through contemplation leads to an adoration of Deity as the maker of the beautiful universe. If man is morally healthy, he is naturally attracted to the types of divine attributes found in perfect specimens of nature. As the whole man participates in the contemplation of beauty, his senses perceiving and his intellect working, he becomes aware of the superior intelligence of God at work and his whole being is uplifted - his Moral faculty responds to his perception of beauty. Nothing distresses him so much as sensing ugliness such as "any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with . . . ease and health . . . ."[32] Ruskin drew an analogy between physical health and the ideal state, which he said is beautiful when its citizens are vitally healthy, and ugly when its members are, in any way, crippled or disintegrated. The job of society, therefore, is to develop man into

a feeling and seeing creature, to encourage him to make his contribution, no matter how humble it might be, and to release the intellectual energy of each individual workman.[33]

From this rather loose connection between Aesthetics, Religion and Morality, Ruskin argued that Nature is essential to the healthy spiritual life of man and consequently to good art. For " . . . art is valuable, or otherwise, only as it expresses the personality, activity, and living perception of a good and great human soul . . . ."[34] Since souls need beauty, the choice for society lies between humanity and machinery, between wealth and riches, between the supremacy of the spirit and soulless materialism. Thus Ruskin's system of aesthetics led to an analysis of society and a firm establishment of a social conscience.

"The Stones of Venice showed us the gulf which lay between us and the Middle Ages," said Morris. "By a marvellous inspiration of genius . . . [Ruskin] attained at one leap to a true conception of mediaeval art which years of minute study had not gained for others."[35]

Though Ruskin preached and denounced and showed the way, he provided no practical scheme for the realization of his ideal. The aesthetics and ethics of Ruskin found fruitful soil in the socialism of Morris's News from Nowhere.

C. Pre-Raphaelitism

The movement of thought and feeling, known as Pre-Raphaelitism was contemporaneous with Ruskin's art criticism. To what extent

the movement was influenced by Ruskin, the major art critic of the time, is difficult to assess, but the similarities are numerous. Pre-Raphaelitism, in many respects, seems to be a practical application of many of Ruskin's theories. Holman Hunt had given Modern Painters an enthusiastic reading before he and Millais initiated the movement in 1849 toward the same ideals of greater simplicity, unaffected expression, and love of truth. The qualities of love of nature, ornamental quality, and epical quality, as explained in Chapter One, may be considered to be direct expressions of those ideals of truth, beauty, and relation described in Modern Painters.[36] The first Pre-Raphaelite principle, the "unending study of nature", may be linked to the ideas of truth, the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature. Likewise the Pre-Raphaelite desire for ornament and design is related to ideas of beauty, and are of moral perception. Epical quality, or "presentment of incident", which are of active intellectual perception, are comparable to ideas of relation. Hunt's statement of the purpose of Pre-Raphaelite art indicates the same high purpose that Ruskin held for art:

> . . . to proclaim that art should interpret to man how much more beautiful the world is, not only in every natural form, but in every pure principle of human life, than they would without her aid deem it to be. 37

That Ruskin approved of the movement is proved by the defence which he made in its behalf when it was bitterly attacked by those who misunderstood its purpose. Regarding the view "Pre-Raphaelite", he said that the Pre-Raphaelites "will draw either what they see, or what

they suppose might have been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent, irrespective of any conventional rules of picture making . . . ."[38] In "On the Nature of Gothic" Ruskin cites one of Hunt's paintings of peasant boys and praises it as an example of pure Naturalism:

> . . . [H]e paints all that he sees in them fearlessly; all the health and humour, and freshness and vitality, together with such awkwardness and stupidity, and what else of negative or positive harm there may be in the creature; but yet so that on the whole we love it, and find it perhaps even beautiful, or if not, at least we see that there is capability of good in it, rather than of evil; and all is lighted up by a sunshine and sweet colour that makes the smock frock as precious as cloth of gold. 39

Instead of depicting only the good or only the evil in nature, the Pre-Raphaelites were "capable of sounding and sympathizing with the whole range of . . . passions."[40]

The "pleasure-giving, recreative aim" of art[41] was not obliterated by the artist's personal honesty and fidelity to truth. In keeping with the moral didacticism of the age, the Pre-Raphaelites looked upon the arts as "moral guides", as "food to sustain strength for noble resolves." Therefore all art must be used responsibly.[42] In attempting to lead man to distinguish between that which is clean in spirit and that productive of ruin to a nation, the Pre-Raphaelites chose themes for their paintings which tend to emphasize moral and social tensions of the century.[43] Perhaps the most striking of such paintings is "Work" by Madox Brown[44] because of its artistic comment on a universal social problem. Carlyle had emphasized the

blessedness of work, Ruskin was beginning to point out, when the painting was executed, the requirement of happiness in work, Holman Hunt was demanding morality in work. The social significance of a painting received emphasis by the addition of "inventions", which held meaning to the viewer, and sometimes by the appendage of a prose comment or sonnet, if the painting were not sufficiently "literary". Just as Ruskin had emphasized the cleansing of the national character, as a basis for art expression,[45] so F.D. Stephens warned that a pure heart is necessary.[46] Holman Hunt pointed out that the current modes of art were "wanting in serious ambition, vital force, and thoroughness of expression",[47] and that "[t]he degradation of art is nothing less than a sign of disease in Society."[48]

The cult of medievalism came to the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Morris as an escape from the drabness of the nineteenth-century world, and for a time they became absorbed with a beauty which was foreign to Victorian life. Morris, however, was so deeply influenced by Ruskinian ideals that his artistic endeavours, which had turned to the decorative arts, drew him into the practical realm of everyday living.

> Dissatisfaction with the drabness and dirt of Victorian England made Morris a Pre-Raphaelite, and Pre-Raphaelitism led him to an artistic re-statement of the principles necessary to the revitalization of that England and to an active awareness of the craftsmanship by which he could contribute to that revitalization. 49

He realized that he could contribute beauty and pleasure to the drab

life about him through beautiful articles for everyday use.[50] He turned to the designing of furniture, which Hunt called "the legitimate work of the artist",[51] and eventually to many other "lesser crafts". He viewed the whole matter thus:

> These arts . . . are part of a great system invented for the expression of a man's delight in beauty: all peoples and times have used them; they have been the joy of free nations, and the solace of oppressed nations; . . . and, best of all, they are the sweeteners of human labour, both to the handicraftsman, whose life is spent in working in them, and to people in general who are influenced by the sight of them at every turn of the day's work: they make our toil happy, our rest fruitful. 52

Morris's deep seated conviction that souls must have beauty and that workmen must be given freedom to enjoy aesthetic accomplishment led him into the economic world and eventually into politics.

D. Morris's Philosophy of Art and Socialism

> The social teachings of Carlyle and the art-doctrine of Ruskin, together with his own experience in the industrial arts, his own passionate love of beauty, which implies in his case a necessary hatred of modern civilization, and his active participation in the political problems of the hour, brought Morris at last by a direct and logical road to his democratic beliefs.
>
> - Anna A. von Helmholtz-Phelan, The Social Philosophy of William Morris (38)

Thus far several milestones on Morris's road to Socialism have been passed - his fascination with the Middle Ages, the influence of the social teachings of Carlyle, the art-doctrines of Ruskin, and the aestheticism of the Pre-Raphaelites. His own high regard for art, however, lies at the root of his discontent with

social and industrial conditions and of his ideals for a future society, in fact at the root of his whole social philosophy. Like Ruskin, he believed that art is an essential part of the whole life of man, "a good thing which all can share, which will elevate all."[53] It gives beauty and dignity to all parts of life, no less to the moral and spiritual aspect of living than to the social and economic aspect.

1. Morris's Concern for Art in the Nineteenth Century

The position of popular art in his epoch was deplorable, thought Morris. To his sensitive soul it seemed to lie helpless and crippled amidst the sea of utilitarian brutality. It was useless, according to Morris, to perform even the most necessary functions: the building of a decent house, ornamenting a book, laying out a garden, or teaching the ladies to dress suitably.[54] He was annoyed by the general unquestioning acceptance of ugliness in all the facets of everyday life.

The people generally lived such pinched and sordid lives[55] that the arts of everyday life had all but died out. The workers were often half-starved because the food was inferior and adulterated, their clothes dirty and greasy, their houses crowded, noisy, and unrestful, and entertainment of low grade.[56] G.M. Young points out that the industrial territories, which lay outside the orbit of the ruling class, "were growing up as best they might, undrained, unpoliced, ungoverned, and unschooled."[57] The huge mass of the oppressed classes

was so burdened by the misery of their own lives and overwhelmed by the greed of the commercial class that they were unable to conceive of any way of escape.

> Read ye their souls in their faces . . .
> Joyless, hopeless, shameless, angerless, set is their stare:
> This is the thing we have made, and what shall help us now,
> For the field hath been laboured and tilled and the teeth
> of the dragon shall grow.
> The Pilgrims of Hope, Part III.[58]

Morris asked how popular art could flourish amid such sordid, aimless, ugly confusion, such "eyeless vulgarity", as that of the nineteenth century.

Except for Millais, stated Morris, the only painters worth considering were those whose minds leaped back across the intervening years into the later Middle Ages. There lay the only hope for the future, the hope that art might find its root again amid the workers of the Middle Ages - perhaps art might still spring up again so that all men might share in it. Morris expressed this hope for the future in many of his letters and lectures:

> Three hundred years, a day in the lapse of ages, has not changed man's nature thus utterly, be sure of that: one day we shall win back Art, that is to say the pleasure of life . . . .
> . . . . . .
> There is our hope: the cause of Art is the cause of the people. 59

Interested in gaining a historical perspective of the arts, Morris traced the development of Gothic architecture from its Greek origins. He found that, through Greek, Roman, and Byzantine periods, it had culminated in the Middle Ages in a Gothic architecture which "springs direct from popular impulse, from the partnership of all

men, great and little, in worthy and exalting aspirations."[60] This logical and organic style had evolved from the ancient styles of the classical peoples and had advanced step by step with the changes in the social life of barbarism and feudalism and civilization.[61] The study of the architecture of the Middle Ages revealed the sense of corporate life which the artists and workmen enjoyed. Morris found in architecture, and related arts of the period, certain characteristics which he deemed commendable: expression of imagination, decorative beauty, realization of material, and skill of execution.[62] And this high tide in art, he felt, culminated with the time of most freedom for the worker. Not yet had enclosures deprived the common people of their land-holdings,neither had begun the commercialism, world trade, and selling of labour, nor had developed the system of monopoly and cornering of power with its insidious machine-labour. The tendency toward equality had not yet been stifled by the rise of a strong political system.[63]

The Renaissance period which followed the Middle Ages marked a sharp decline in the arts. Only during the early days of the Renaissance were there artists of high calibre. Morris called the early Renaissance "the fruit of the blossoming-time . . . [of] the Gothic period".[64] Afterwards was produced only "inanity and plausibility" in all the arts, "decent unenthusiastic ecclesiasticism"[65] in St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London. No more did all men share in art, for art had lost its romance, its "humanity". The workshop system

was eliminated and handicraftsmen no longer worked side by side with the artists. The time was gone "when everybody that made anything made a work of art besides a useful piece of goods, and it gave them pleasure to make it."[66]

The division of labour had taken the place of the craft-system, and profit-making had become an end in itself - the greedy commercial system, in Marx's terms, had begun its war. It was making its demands for cheap labour and large output, and setting man against man, class against class, with this motto, 'what I gain you lose . . . .'[67] Instead of producing wares to satisfy the genuine spontaneous needs of the people, commerce had created a market-demand for the sole purpose of individual profits. "The market . . . was now the master, the man the slave . . . ."[68] Morris saw, on one hand, the ceaseless creation of artificial wants, the love of luxury, "unredeemed by beauty"; and, on the other hand, the worker as "grist for the capitalistic machine":

> Peace at home! - what peace, while the rich man's
> will is strife,
> And the poor is the grist that he grindeth, and
> life devoureth life?
> The Pilgrims of Hope, Section III[69]

In giving as little as possible to the public, the commercial producer was dealing with a public of enemies, and thus intensifying the division of society into two classes.

Though Morris had pleaded in 1877[70] for a peaceful revolution on the part of the working classes, he became later a militant Socialist. His path, however, lay between two extremes, that of anarchy, which he feared would result only in inconsequent, fruitless revolt, and that of

palliation (Fabianism, for example), which would result in only partial change - "our masters would be our masters still."[71] He embraced the revolutionary principle of Marx because he believed revolution would hasten historical processes and shorten the road to "the regeneration and happiness of the whole human race." Not passive resistance nor legal enactment but complete revolution, militant if need be, was his plan for the complete reversal of the social order. In 1884 he concluded an address to the working classes thus:

> What the cost may be, who can tell? Will it be possible to win peace peaceably? Alas, how can it be? We are so hemmed in by wrong and folly, that in one way or other we must always be fighting against them: our own lives may see no end to the struggle, perhaps no obvious hope of the end. It may be that the best we can hope to see is that struggle getting sharper and bitterer day by day, until it breaks out openly at last into the slaughter of men by actual warfare instead of by the slower and crueller methods of "peaceful" commerce. If we live to see that, we shall live to see much; for it will mean the rich classes grown conscious of their own wrong and robbery, and consciously defending them by open violence; and then the end will be drawing near. 72

Carlyle saw in the division of rich and poor the tension for potential war; Marx and Engels saw revolution as a principle of historical process; Morris saw revolution as a militant, well planned, coercive action on the part of the working classes to destroy all distinctions between classes and nationalities by the complete abolition of private property.

Not only Morris's study of history but his love and practice of art forced him into a hatred of contemporary civilization - with

its "glutting market, adulteration and puffery, folly and luxury of the rich, sham wealth and sham service".[73] In his participation in the industrial arts, which we have seen was largely inspired by his medievalism and an outgrowth of his interest in Pre-Raphaelitism, he realized at first hand the condition of the English working-class and their appalling lack of artistic appreciation.

> That field of the arts, whose harvest should be the chief part of human joy, hope, and consolation, has been, I say, dealt hardly with by the division of labour, once the servant, and now the master of ... [civilization]. It has thwarted me in many ways . . . has so stood in the way of my getting the help from others which my art forces me to crave 74

With the instinct for beauty so sadly depressed, his workmen, he feared, would turn out a product which was "joyless, ugly, devoid of spontaneity and joy." But as Morris sought for the workers in his firm conditions similar to the medieval craftsman, the products expressed a greater degree of individuality and a greater appreciation of artistic quality - they eventually set a standard that has influenced our lives even in the twentieth century. In his lectures he constantly pleaded for happier conditions for all workmen. Perhaps Morris did as much for revitalizing the artistic conscience of England through his activity with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings,[75] which he organized in 1877, as in his participation in and encouragement of the industrial crafts. Repeatedly he urged upon the people that the special beauty of medieval buildings as the outcome of the conditions of society of that epoch was impossible of restoration by

workmen of the nineteenth century who toiled "against the grain under the threat of starvation."[76] From 1877 his lectures on "Anti-Scrape", Art and Life, and eventually Art and Society led him further along the road to Socialism.

"The death of Art",[77] he believed, "was too high a price to pay for the material prosperity of the middle classes."[78] He warned that the "blindness to beauty would draw down a kind of revenge one day,"[79] that a people devoid of artistic appreciation would inevitably become a dead people, "destined to slavery and decay."[80] His hope was that the rising revolt against utilitarianism would join hands with the changes working to bring about a new state of society, and thus civilization would be able to catch up "the slender thread of tradition before it be too late."[81] Though he dreaded the inevitable revolution that he felt must take place, he could see no other way to restore happiness and art to a dying people.

2. The Question of Labour

In viewing the previous centuries in retrospect, Morris concluded that the heart of the condition-of-England question lay in the day-to-day work of the people. Like Ruskin, whose "Nature of Gothic" embodied principles of universal validity, Morris realized that art, labour, and happiness are closely linked, that real art is "the expression of man's happiness in his labour."[82] Art in the Middle Ages was a necessity in life, not merely a luxury, and the birthright of all workmen. Morris took a historical survey of the whole matter. From

the fifteenth century to the nineteenth the role of the workman in society had changed. Gradually as the trend to division of labour grew, the workman became first a "tender" of machines and then a "slave of machines". Whereas in medieval times no profit could be made out of anything but the land, in modern times labour became commerciable. The buying of labour for profit-making led to the buying of more labour; work became "unpraised, unrewarded, monotonous drudgery."[83] As we have already seen, under the scourge of division of labour, the worker lost his sense of achievement because he could not see the effect of his efforts. As pleasure in labour diminished, the quality of products became inferior, and art gradually died out. Cole has remarked thus:

> . . . Morris had firm hold on the most abiding secret of personal happiness and social well-being - that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a people unhappy in its labour to enter into the earthly paradise. 84

It is little wonder that Morris hated the whole trend toward mass production. Machinery had so reduced the value of labour that the workman was in danger of starving "in the midst of a plenty which his own hands had helped to create."[85] It had intensified his burden and caused a greater division between rich and poor. Yet only some thinkers of the nineteenth century realized that the degradation of the laborer was due to the excessive use of machinery. J. Stuart Mill doubted that mechanical inventions had done anything "to lighten the toil of labour",[86] and Samuel Butler satirized the use of machines by showing the result if

machines were just like men.[87] On the other hand, Edward Bellamy encouraged the use of labour-saving inventions in all sorts of industry,[88] because his attitude to work was totally different from Morris's. To Bellamy, work meant ". . . a necessary duty to be discharged before we can fully devote ourselves to the higher exercise of our faculties, the intellectual, and spiritual enjoyments and pursuits which alone mean life."[89] Whereas Bellamy wished to reduce labour because it is irksome but necessary, Morris wished to reduce the pain in labour, because labour is the joyful expression of one's creative impulses. If used with discretion, machines might find a limited function in society:

> In a true society these miracles of ingenuity would be for the first time used for minimizing the amount of time spent in unattractive labour, which by their means might be so reduced as to be but a very light burden on each individual. All the more as these machines would most certainly be much improved when it was no longer a question as to whether their improvement would "pay" the individual, but rather whether it would benefit the community. 90

As interest and pleasure in handiwork increased, Morris felt that the use of machinery would be somewhat restricted or perhaps eliminated.[91] There is little evidence of machinery in Morris's utopia. As Geoffrey Tillotson points out in "Morris and Machines",[92] Morris and the nineteenth-century theorists were "so near to the machine that they saw only its ugliness, the ugliness of its contemporary products, and the ugliness which the new conditions of industry were forcing people into", that they failed to see the tremendous possibilities of machines used wisely. Civilization once industrialized could never go back to a pre-machine era.[93]

But the social question remained: how to restore to men "those satisfactions in labour and leisure which are the twin foundations of happiness."[94] In "Art and Socialism", Morris makes three demands regarding labour: work must be worth doing, it must be of itself pleasant to do, and it must be done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious.[95] No one willing to work should ever fear want of such employment as would earn for him all due necessaries of mind and body: honourable and fitting work, a beautiful home and decent surroundings, and full leisure for rest of mind and body.[96] All barbarous waste should be avoided by the manufacture of only those articles necessary to simple living. Such ennobling of the daily and common work Morris called the Democracy of Art, "art made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user."[97]

The reward of such labour would be <u>life</u>,[98] a work-pleasure which would spring up almost spontaneously from an instinct amongst people to exercise their energies pleasurably.[99] The opportunity of expressing their own thoughts to their fellows by means of their daily work would increase their self-respect and their sense of freedom and gain the affection of their fellowmen. No coercion would be necessary as in <u>Looking Backward</u>, where labour was to be performed under strict discipline with stringent measures as punishment.[100] Morris took exception also to the honour and emulation and prizes or promotion which were to be the incentives to labour in Bellamy's rigidly regimented organization. No regimentation for Morris![101] In his utopia he allowed for a number of Obstinate Refusers, perhaps as a

direct protest against the severe regimentation in Looking Backward. The strength of Morris's attack against Bellamy is in his great emphasis on pleasure and freedom:

> . . .[U]nhappy and slavish work must come to an end. In that day we shall take Gothic Architecture by the hand, and know it for what it was and what it is. 102

Morris knew that he was reiterating, and extending the basic principles that Ruskin had already laid down in "On the Nature of Gothic."

3. Freedom, Equality, Fellowship - Socialism

The "freedom to work and live and enjoy" was the gospel of William Morris.[103] In contrast to Bellamy's militaristic regimentation of labour, in Looking Backward, Morris demanded freedom for each man to produce what he wanted, to enjoy the results of his labour, and to pursue art as he wished. In a simple, natural life, he should be free from want, free from the oppression which Capitalism imposes, and free from all mastery and coercion, in fact free from the whole tyrannous profit-system by which the strong plunder the weak and destroy art.[104] Whereas Ruskin had attacked the idea of liberty as that which made it possible for ". . . multitudes to be sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke",[105] Morris encouraged the general movement towards freedom because he felt that if the bonds of Constitutionalism, Competition, and Mastery were broken, men could possess "the fruits of the earth and the fruits of their toil". When Morris first entered politics, in 1877, in connection with the Eastern Question, his words of exhortation were:

> Working men of England, one word of warning: I doubt if you know the bitterness of hatred against freedom and progress that lies at the hearts of a certain part of the richer classes in this country . . . . These men cannot speak of your order, of its aims, of its leaders, without a sneer or an insult: these men, if they had the power . . . would thwart your just aspirations, would silence you, would deliver you bound hand and foot for ever to irresponsible capital. 106

What could the middle class do? They could renounce their class and cast in their lot with the victims, with those condemned to lack of education, refinement, leisure, pleasure, and renown, and perhaps even to a life lower than that of the most brutal savage. "There is," said Morris, "no other way."[107] Without equality, there could be no liberty - no other road to freedom than by the abolition of classes and a complete equality amongst all men, socially, economically and politically. Education, especially in the handicrafts, would raise the standards of the degraded classes and set free the instincts for beauty and imagination which make artistic work possible. Beautiful and clean surroundings would inspire workers to higher endeavour, and pleasurable social contacts would develop the sense of brotherhood and co-operation needful for a practical equality.[108] As the machinery for production and the management of property were altered, as private property and privilege were abolished, as waste and poverty were eliminated, the terrible gulf between riches and poverty would gradually fill in. For "[i]t is only a society of equals," said Morris, "which can choose the life it will live . . . to forego gross luxury and base utilitarianism . . . [and become] the master of its machinery and not the servant."[109]

Government would become localized in communes or "motes", with all adults participating in decisions. Occasional regional conferences or a world federation made up of representatives would handle matters, such as trade, beyond the limits of the commune. The evolution of democracy would thus be complete. As Morris viewed matters in retrospect, he realized that a "strange continuity of life runs through all historical events . . .;"[110] and that a striving for social, economic, and political equality was already in progress and about "to break up our rotten sham society."[111]

As a result, true fellowship would exist. Association would replace Competition and Social order would replace Individualist anarchy. The tyranny of the Commercial system would give place to content and peace and honesty, and politics would serve its true end, "to bring about a state of things in which all men may live at peace and free from over-burdensome anxiety, and provided with work which is pleasant to them and produces results useful to their neighbours."[112] As refinement and culture increased, and as more courage, kindness, and truth developed in human nature, art as it once existed would spring back to life in greater measure than ever before. Morris's dream was as follows:

> . . . new co-operative art of life, in which there will be no slaves, no vessels to dishonour, though there will necessarily be subordination of capacities, in which the consciousness of each one that he belongs to a corporate body, working harmoniously, each for all, and all for each, will bring about real and happy equality. 113

Morris believed that the "innate good" that exists in everyone can be developed by "equality of fellowship".[114] To him, freedom and equality meant fellowship, a veritable heaven upon earth,[115] which man might have for the choosing.

If the aims of art were to be accomplished, Morris concluded that inevitably all fine art "must go under, where or however it may come up again."[116] But he was confident that art would live again, that a total reconstitution of society would be followed by a glorious rebirth of art, as a spontaneous expression of a happy people. In a letter of 1881 he states that the only remedy for oppressive living conditions and suppression of art is "the deliberate destruction of art and renunciation of beauty. There could be no compromise - the choice was between a system which would lead to slavery for all except the privileged and a system founded on equality and fellowship."[117] Already the Change had begun, according to Morris, who believed that the "evolution of Society was making for Socialism in the long run . . . ."[118] This conclusion was not arrived at, however, by a close Marxian analysis of history but by a simple contrast, in his ordinary work, between the present day and times past.[119] The air was already "laden with the coming storm" of a Revolution, awful to contemplate but preferable to a continued misery and degradation of the workman and a suppression of all creative powers. "Commercialism, competition, has sown the wind recklessly, and must reap the whirlwind . . . ."[120] But he viewed revolution as a "catharsis", a purgation of the evils of

society. In the romantic language of The Water of the Wondrous Isles (1896), the revolutionists were the lily-and-rose champions who "gathered force and went thither in arms to live or die in the quarrel, and so sweeten the earth, as did the men of ancient days when they slew the dragons and the giants, and the children of Hell, and the Sons of Cain."[121] The revolution was thus the Change which was to make all other changes possible, for "[i]ll would Change be at whiles were it not for the Change beyond the Change."[122] A "bright new world" would rise from the foundation-stones of freedom, equality, and fellowship, and pleasurable work.

> ". . . [W]hat I mean by Socialism," said Morris, "is a condition of society in which there should be neither rich nor poor, neither master nor master's man, neither idle nor over-worked, neither brain-sick brain workers, nor heart-sick hand workers, in a word, in which all men would be living in equality of condition, and would manage their affairs unwastefully, and with the full consciousness that harm to one would mean harm to all - the realization at last of the meaning of the word Commonwealth." 123

4. Morris Versus Marx

About the time that Morris wanted desperately to restore to the workers the element of joy in their labour and the pleasure of art in their lives, he was met by the Marxist program. In 1881 Hyndman published England for All and founded the Social Democratic Federation. Morris became an early member and helped edit the paper Justice.[124] Marxism offered by the means of political and economic revolt against capitalism a decent livelihood for all. Instead of private enterprise and its exploitation of labour for profit, all means of production were

to be communized and the bourgeoisie divested of power. It suggested that society is an organic entity whose forms grow out of the methods of production prevailing at a given time and place;[125] in short, that society operates on an evolutionary principle. In the long run it would accomplish its goal, a classless society, totally communized and controlled by a democratically organized state operating in the interests of the community.[126] Marx, like Morris, called upon the working class for its own emancipation:

> It is not only the labour that is divided, subdivided, and portioned out betwixt divers men: it is the man himself who is cut up, and metamorphosised into the automatic spring of an exclusive operation. 127

The workers must therefore unite and, in loyalty to their class, rise against the bourgeoisie, who have become in the historical process unfit to be the ruling class, and thus bring about the new classless society. Because he had little relish for the scientific study of economics,[128] and because he had for years been separately moving toward a socialistic theory of life, Morris fitted these theories of Marx in with his own program without giving them much analysis or criticism.

The socialism of Morris was, however, vastly different from that of Marx because the Morrissian philosophy was idealistic and humane, the Marxian materialistic and coldly, dispassionately scientific. Marx, says Edmund Wilson, " . . . was not among those working-class leaders who have merged themselves with working class life."[129] He was not concerned with social conditions of production and ignored

the distribution of goods;[130] he was merely using the idea of class struggle as a weapon against the capitalists whom he hated.[131] Morris, on the other hand, was concerned with the man "with a soul latent in this ill-equipped languid worker grudgingly trained and grudgingly paid for a dullday's work ... to him he talked, for him he thought and worked, to him he looked in the future."[132] Morris's revolt was against industrialization more than against capitalism. He deplored the ugliness of the industrial life and the use of machines because they dehumanized the workers and deprived them of the joy in labour which was their due; Marx hoped for the "conquest of power" by the working class in order that science might be set in motion as "a great liberating force".[133] Wilson attributes Marx's failure to consider human nature[134] as a result of his background of disappointing experiences in an authoritarian country,[135] and remarks also on the discrepancy between Marx's proposals to benefit humanity and the ruthlessness and hatred he inculcates in his means of attaining them.[136] The socialism of Marx is considered "scientific" because he based it on the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat in relation to production. He abhorred the "utopian" socialism of "made" revolutions of idealistic dreamers;[137] yet his idea of a classless society emerging from an ugly revolution is surely utopian. The altruistic and emotional appeal of Morris's socialistic literature is certainly far greater than that of Marx. The latter betrays his inner obsessions with images of "cruel discomfort, rape, repression, mutilation and

massacre";[138] the former reveals a kindliness, a magnanimity, and nobility of nature which is indeed rare and beautiful. In spite of Bruce Glasier's evident bias in favour of his friend Morris, I am inclined to agree with his reaction as he compared Hyndman's orthodox Marxist anti-capitalist oratory with Morris's propaganda.

> Hyndman's lecture, though it excited, did not inspire. One gained no increase of faith in man's humanity to man from it. There was hardly a ray of idealism in it . . . . When I contrasted Morris's lecture with Hyndman's and compared the two men themselves - their impress on their hearers, their personal qualities - I felt then as I have felt ever since that the two lectures were different kinds of socialism even as the two men were different types of Socialists. And I then felt, and still feel, that I liked the one Socialism and not the other. And I felt and now feel more than ever that the one Socialism is true, universally and for ever, while the other Socialism is at least only half-Socialism and makes only temporary and conditional appeal, and that not to the higher social, but the more groundling and selfish instincts of the race. 139

Marx belonged, in fact, to a different line of thinkers, that of the economic theorists, such as Ricardo, Adam Smith, Malthus, Bentham - with their policies of self-interest, individualism, "laissez-faire", and generally materialistic forms of dialectic. Morris was, on the other hand, in the Coleridgean line of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Owen. His socialism arose, not from the labor theory of value and historical analysis by Hegelian dialectic, but from three basic roots, as already explained: medievalism, joy in labour, and the place of art in human endeavour. His was, as Wright calls it, a "medievalistic aesthetic socialism". Bernard Shaw wrote, regarding the Marxian theory of value and explanation of surplus value, thus:

> Morris put all that aside instinctively as the intellectual trifling it actually is, and went straight to the real issues on which he was quite simple and quite right. 140

In his practical socialism he attacked the fundamental problems that related to the happiness and well-being of the nineteenth-century workman: the burden of labour, the demand for leisure, the rising national production, the abolition of poverty, and the need of fellowship and desire for artistic expression (the latter, Morris's unique contribution to economic theory). E. P. Thompson, who was determined to make Morris a Marxist in his book, William Morris, Artist to Revolutionary, admits that neither Marx nor Engels worked out the social function of the arts and social morality in relation to the division of labour.[141] Marx, in fact, denied the connection between creative social changes and high creative work in art.[142] Morris's inclusion of aesthetic values in the practical life of the world "gave a colour to socialism without which today it would be almost inconceivable."[143]

Ample evidence of the development of Morris's brand of socialism from the mainspring of art has already been presented in this chapter. At this point Trevelyan's words aptly sum up Morris's position:

> . . .[T]he idealism which was abhorrent to the true Marxian materialist was upheld by the poet and artist William Morris, whose Socialism in the pleasant News from Nowhere was partly a continuation of Ruskin, partly an imaginary vision of what the Middle Ages might have been like without the Church. It is a rebellion hardly more against capitalism than against the ugliness of modern city life. It looks as much backwards as forwards, as much to art and beauty as to politics. 144

Chapter III

THE TEXTURE OF LIFE IN NEWS FROM NOWHERE

> . . . [T]he kind of life he describes in News from Nowhere had long been explicit in his whole work, in his architectural theory and practice and in his craftsmanship no less than in his poems and tales.
> - Morton, 156

Here, in an essay of the imagination, Morris sketches for the first and only time what he would like to see in the state of the future. His main motive, as we have seen in Chapter 2, is his desire for a kind of society in which creative art may thrive, a state in which social life has been remoulded to make beauty more widely and more deeply diffused. Here he paints in panoramic fashion the joy and beauty of the new life in a socialistic state, for he feels that only in such a state is it possible for people to have real freedom and enjoyment in their work. Morris's Socialism is like no other kind of socialism: it is the demand of an artist for economic reform, for the mitigation of all the ugliness of the industrial world, in order that the innate artistic instinct be not crushed but allowed free scope of expression.

Along with the abolition of private property which is a common aim of all socialism, Morris advocates, as well, an extension of individual freedom. News from Nowhere deals with the consequences which

follow such measures and the rewards which come in the form of three kinds of pleasure - that of work, of art, and of abounding health - all of which constitute Life itself.

A. The Consequences of the Abolition of Private Property

The smoothly running communal life of the land of Nowhere depends on the total abolition of private property. All capital, in the form of land, labour, and the machinery of production and distribution, has been released from private ownership and is now administered for the public good. Following the Change, which is described dramatically by the old man, Hammond (103-134), a period of state socialism has intervened as a necessary means to an end. But at the time that Morris allows us to look in on his utopian state, sometime after the year 2000, practically all the difficulties involved in the Change have been overcome, and the socialistic society is functioning efficiently.

The first evidence of public ownership is the complete change in the commercial system. A sculler is bewildered at the proffer of money for his services (10), and children in a market booth charge no price for the handsomely carved pipe and fine Latakia tobacco which the guest "buys" (37).[1] Food and fine wine are freely served and services pleasantly performed with no expectation of payment or "tips". With the profit motive eliminated, no World-Market exists with its elaborate system of buying and selling, which forced men to make sham wares not needed by society (93). No factories spout forth

billows of poisonous smoke, no horrible muck-heaps litter the landscape, and no murky, befouled water effuses stench along the Thames. Instead an occasional mill stands strikingly beautiful amid a marvelously lovely garden (195), the few simple machines that still remain lighten rather than intensify labour, and men are no longer driven into a frantic haste and hurry that destroys the pleasure of living.[2] Goods are exchanged under regulations of the markets, "varying according to circumstances and guided by custom" (84).

Attendant with the change in the commercial system is a surprising revolution in public morality. The desire for personal acquisition of property having been eliminated through public ownership of capital, the people no longer have the former motives for crime, and it is looked upon as "a mere spasmodic disease",[3] which very rarely afflicts the healthy people of Nowhere (83). Consequently civil law and criminal law have completely eliminated themselves (80-81), and punishment consists of humiliation and remorse, and whatever free atonement is possible. In some cases the ill-doer, if sick or mad, may need to be restrained, but in most cases he will take the whole consequences of the act upon himself and perhaps go into voluntary isolation. He does not in any case "expect society to whitewash him by punishing him" (167), and therefore no law-courts, prisons, or gallows exist.[4] No code of public opinion, which may at times be tyrannical and unreasonable, takes the place of courts (59), and no unvarying set of conventional rules is used to judge people. Such

sentiment as exists is real and general. With the motive of gain eliminated, men and women evidence, in every encounter, goodwill and kindliness, and their faces, as a result, are "frankly and openly joyous", some with "great nobility of expression" (23).

As a further result of the abolition of private property, a new relationship has arisen between men and women, because the woman can no longer be the property of the man, whether he is "husband, father, brother, or what not" (81). Marriage thus consists of a free association between two people of the opposite sex, which can be broken off at the will of either or both parties. Clara and Dick, for instance, have separated after two years of marriage, leaving their two children with a relative. No divorce is possible because no divorce-courts exist:

> "Property quarrels being no longer possible, what remains in these matters that a court of law could deal with?" asks Hammond. "Fancy a court for enforcing a contract of passion or sentiment!" (56)

When such an unhappy situation occurs, there is no pretext of unity, and the couple separate. If a reconciliation takes place, as in the case of Clara and Dick, the couple may again take up their marriage arrangement.

Associated with the communalization of property has developed a communalization of social feeling. The people, living in close association and no longer prompted by competitive and acquisitive interests, have developed a social consciousness, a feeling of kindliness and good will, a sense of equality, which can be termed "fellowship".

The consequent good manners and ease of behaviour on every hand are apparent to the guest who has been welcomed into their midst. The road-menders, who are laughing and talking merrily with each other and the women, stop long enough to help ease the wheels over the half undone road and then hurry back to their work, "only stopping to give us a smiling good-day" (47). The haymakers, who are working "deliberately and well and steadily", their merry talk as "noisy as a grove of autumn starlings" (154), wish the guest "the sele of the morning" and chat amiably with him till his friends arrive. When the old man, Henry Morsom, has invited the group of travelers into his home, the guest is pleased to see the ease of manner and good fellowship that exist between the fine, town-bred Clara and the pretty, sun-burnt, vivacious Ellen (153). The final picture of Nowhere is a crowd of handsome, happy-looking men and women who, looking like "a bed of tulips in the sun", chat happily at their haymaking feast. With no urge to defraud one's neighbour and with people no longer degraded and impoverished by commercialism, it has become easy to accept the religion of humanity: Love thy neighbour as thyself! The real and sincere fellowship which exists in the land of Nowhere illustrates the truth of John Ball's words, "Fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death."[5] Morris, says Holbrook Jackson,

> . . . wore the mantle of John Ball, and saw with a full certainty that in fellowship and in emulation alone can life be properly used. He knew for certain that it was not in the cold 'betterment' of human conditions that the new life would come about, but that in addition to this men would have to realize the essential fellowship of their lives and come to live together as comrades - free of slaves and of masters. [6]

B. Consequences of the Extension of Individual Freedom

Morris's idea of the new State is not that of a militaristic regime, but an equality of free groups, a familial Communism which involves an unlimited extension of individual freedom, material and spiritual, as long as it does not interfere with the freedom of others. With complete equality of condition, individuals are allowed free play of personality and idiosyncrasy. Morris abhorred the regimentation in Bellamy's Looking Backward and could tolerate no sort of coercive interference in his own utopia. Looking back over the years, Hammond could see that the world was "brought to its second birth"[7] by the longing of the people for freedom and equality (104-5). This condition of life, explains Morsom, was but vaguely conceived at first but wholly necessary as "the bond of all happy human society" (178). Such an extension of freedom was, however, destined to bring about far-reaching consequences in many areas of living.

Families are no longer held together by coercion, legal or social, but "by mutual liking and affection, and everybody is free to come and go as he or she pleases" (81). Children, especially, have gained, in contrast to the nineteenth-century ancestors, a surprising amount of freedom. From the ages of six or eight years to sixteen or seventeen they live in tents in the woods in summer, where they learn to play and work together and get to know the wild creatures (27-28), with the result that they develop their practical faculties to the fullest possible extent. No "artificial disabilities" are allowed

to make them something less than men and women (61).

Though to the guest the children seem at first to run wild without being taught anything, and though they may not know the terms "school" and "education", education does take place continuously but mainly by incidental learning, with the community as the classroom.

Living as they do a free and easy life, such as that in Kensington wood, the children learn to swim, ride ponies, cook, mow, thatch, do odd jobs at carpentering, keep shop - whatever they are inclined to learn. ". . . '[T]is no use forcing people's tastes" (30).[8] By their natural inclination to imitate their elders, they learn gardening, street-paving, house-building, sheep-shearing, reaping and ploughing. "Most children, seeing books lying about, manage to read by the time they are four years old . . . ." (29) They pick up languages quickly through social contact. Thus equipped to learn anything they wish, they may, if they feel so inclined, read history, political economy, and economics, or study mathematics. In their daily work, art has become an integral part of their everyday life.[9] The factors, then, that account for their superior practical education are a stimulating environment, both moral and physical, and abundant library facilities,[10] although bookishness is not encouraged above the living of an active life (150-51). Leisure, nevertheless, is properly valued: For " in this as in other matters," says Hammond, "we have become wealthy: we can afford to give ourselves time to grow" (64).

With such a leisurely, liberal "system" of education the usual

problems that confront educators are neatly avoided: individual differences take care of themselves; for example, "some children . . . will take to books very early . . . and find their level before they are twenty years old " (31); transfer of learning becomes natural in the completely integrated environment of the community; and discipline problems are rare because the children are happy in their work. The students are "generally such pleasant people; so kind and sweet tempered; so humble, and at the same time so anxious to teach everybody all that they know" (31). Education has become so refined that, paradoxically, no education[11] becomes the very best education.[12] In a classless society with equality of condition, the ultimate aim of education seems easily achieved: to enable man to develop to the fullest extent whatever of virtue lies in him.

Not only have children gained immense freedoms but there is repeated emphasis on the changed status of women which the extension of freedom has brought. The Emancipation of Women movement of the nineteenth century has become a dead controversy: the men no longer have any opportunity of tyrannising over the women, or the women over the men. The women are free to do what they can do best, be it serving wholesome and tasty meals (14), caring for a house in a skilful manner (60), working industriously in the hayfield (154), or carving a relief of flowers and figures for a building (174). They are respected as child-bearers and rearers of children, desired as women, and loved as companions. Because of the new pattern of life, in which they need

have no anxieties about the future of their children, they have become increasingly good-looking (61-2). Vivacious young women - none of them ever appear old - frequently appear in the land of Nowhere, remarkable for the long lines of their face and form and hair, and their gaily-ornamented, flowing raiment, which veils the form "without either muffling or caricaturing it" (139).[13]

> . . . [I]t was pleasant indeed to see them, they were so kind and happy-looking in expression of face, so shapely and well-knit of body, and thoroughly healthy-looking and strong (14).

The guest is constantly aware, however, of the contrast the utopian women make with those of the nineteenth century. As he approaches the promised hayfield, he imagines it "peopled with men and women worthy of the sweet abundance of midsummer . . . and its endless wealth of beautiful sights, and delicious sounds and scents" (144). But he recalls, in contrast, the hayfield from the past with its row of gaunt women, "lean, flat-breasted, ugly, without a grace of form or face about them; dressed in wretched skimpy gowns, and hideous flapping sun-bonnets, moving their rakes in a listless mechanical way" (143).[14]

Another area of living in which unlimited freedom has brought a transformation is that of government, which now is based on the freedom of individuals from economic need and from tyranny of private interests. In the usual sense of the term no government exists, because in a system of equals and for a people enjoying true wealth no elaborate system of government is needed (75).

> "It is true," says Hammond, "that we have to make some arrangement about our affairs . . . and it is also true that everybody does not always agree with the details of these arrangements; but, further, it is true that a man no more needs an elaborate system of government, with its army, navy, and police, to force him to give way to the will of the majority of his equals, than he wants a similar machinery to make him understand that his head and a stone wall cannot occupy the same space at the same moment" (75-6).

In the nineteenth century, according to Hammond, government was a "machinery of tyranny", which existed for the sole purpose of guarding the interests of the rich. Its power resided in the law-courts, backed by an executive which controlled the brute force of the army, navy, and police (76). With the modern "habit of acting on the whole for the best", a new pattern of living based on association instead of competition has supplanted the old system, and consequently decisions are reached by the will of the majority of adults concerned. "Parliament" and "politics" come into the account of Nowhere only in the form of lively bits of satire.

C. The Pleasures of Life: Work, Art, Health

Under a system in which private property is abolished and individual freedom is extended, certain important pleasures are bound to revive or spring up. Of these pleasures three stand out most noticeably in News from Nowhere: the pleasure of work, the pleasure of art and beauty in every area of life, and the pleasure of abounding health - all of which constitute, together with fellowship, the wealth that is Life itself.

Becoming gradually aware of the revolution that has taken place in the attitude towards work, the guest notices all along the way the magnificent enthusiasm with which people regard it - the children in the shops who prefer work to idleness (39-40); the folk who collect in Banded-Workshops to do hand-work, such as glass-blowing, because they like to work together (46); the gang of handsome, clean-built road-menders who, laughing and talking merrily, smite great strokes and are "very deft in their labour" (47); the gaily dressed men and women who, "noisy with merry talk", perform the pleasant "easy-hard" work of haymaking (154). No longer mere tenders of machines, the people work because they like it, and because it does them good.

> . . . [A]ll work is now pleasurable; either because of the hope of gain in honour and wealth[15] with which the work is done, which causes pleasurable excitement, even when the actual work is not pleasant; or else because it has grown into a pleasurable habit, as in the case with what you may call mechanical work; and lastly (and most of our work is of this kind) because there is conscious sensuous pleasure in the work itself; it is done, that is, by artists (92).

Such pleasure is but one of the rewards which come as a result of the amazing freedom of the workers. Though all people work,[16] no methods of coercion exist, nor need exist, because the unattractive, irksome work is left undone (118-19), or is done by machinery (97). The few simple machines that still remain[17] lighten instead of intensify labour. Instead of "grumpy weariness", the working hours of men and women are rather "merry parties of men and maids, young men and old enjoying themselves over their work."[18] People, living in small

centers, soon find out what they are fit for, and no man is sacrificed to the wants of another. If a piece of work particularly interests a number of people, they may continue with it instead of joining in the seasonal work. Up the river the Obstinate Refusers are enjoying such a privilege, Philippa busily carving, Kate modelling, and the masons working with mallet and chisel[19] (172 ff). In such a Fellowship of free and contented workers, Morris preserves their individuality and originality, endows them with freedom of thought, and allows them free expression of their enthusiasm and love of nature. The guest notices that a high degree of excellence has been achieved in their work, because the workman, no longer hindered by competition and a World-Market, can now "put forth whatever is in him, and make his hands set forth his mind and soul" (150). The Change has thus established an attitude toward work that supports the world of the artist.

There was once a danger that loss of competitive incentive would allow the people to settle into an apathy and "a dull level of utilitarian comfort" (133). But the remedy lay, according to Hammond, in the production of art, which has become "a necessary part of the labour of every man who produces" (134), a work-pleasure, or art, which has sprung up from an instinct among people who have an innate craving for beauty.[20] They began to ornament the wares they made and eventually gained a great pleasure in their work. ". . . [T]hen all was gained, and we were happy. So may it be for ages and ages!" concludes old Hammond (134).

Henry Morsom explains that, after the exodus from the towns to the country, the arts of life were gradually recaptured (177 ff.). By long deliberation and experiment, the people recovered such lost arts as that of soap-making and mutton-boiling; by studying the construction and operation of elaborate machines, they gathered an idea of handicraft; and from working with the old men the younger acquired some idea of artisanship, the use of the saw and plane, and the work of the smithy. The guest views a collection of articles of manufacture and art illustrative of the period of transition and discerns that as machine after machine was quietly dropped, under the excuse that machines could not produce works of art, the articles showed a degree of change.[21] At first rough and unskilful, they later acquired a greater refinement of workmanship and imaginative execution.[22]

> The guest . . . wondered indeed at the deftness and abundance of beauty of the work of men who had at last learned to accept life itself as a pleasure, and the satisfaction of the common needs of mankind and the preparation for them, as work fit for the best of the race. (180)

In the quaint and elegant glass wares, the beautifully decorated pottery, and the impressive damascened bronze doors at Hammersmith - in a multitude of decorated objects throughout the land - lay proof that in a society no longer diseased, no indication exists of a diseased art.[23]

Not only in the skilfully-executed decoration has art "come up again" in fuller measure than ever before, but in the realization of material; for instance, in homes and other structures. Wherever

possible, these buildings made by man's hands must be in accord with nature to be beautiful. A new appreciation is felt for Hampton Court, for example, which is "a great red-brick pile of building, partly of the latest Gothic, partly of the court-style of Dutch William, but so blended together by the bright sun and beautiful surroundings, including the bright blue river, which it looked down upon, that even amidst the beautiful buildings of that new happy time it had a strange charm about it" (144-45). The homes are generally built of red brick and roofed with tiles (9), except in the village of Godstow which is unique in that the entire structures, walls and roof, are built of grey stone to blend with the stony countryside (186). The delightful medieval structures of Eton and Windsor, and the Abbey and Elizabethan House, "none the worse for many years of appreciative habitation" (163), suggest the solidity and durability which Morris required in architecture. At many-gabled Kelmscott the pleasing combination of old and new architecture adds to the beauty of the earth instead of marring it. The rooms within the buildings may be panelled and carved as in Ellen's home, or hung with tapestries and pictures as at Kelmscott, or ornamented with forcefully designed friezes in baked clay as at the Guest Hall; the furniture may be of the simplest like that at Kelmscott, or highly ornamented like that at Bloomsbury Market Hall. Morris, who disliked a cluttered interior, once said, "I have never been in any rich man's house which would not have looked better for having a bonfire made outside of it of nine-tenths of all that it held."[24]

In the matter of interiors, then, as in life generally, simplicity was his watchword. For Morris believed that the true unit of art is the dwelling itself, "well-built, beautiful, suitable to its purpose, and duly ornamented and furnished so as to express the kind of life which the inmates live . . . ."[25] Only then when all slavish work has come to an end, can architecture be the expression of a happy people who have taken Gothic "by the hand and know it for what it was and what it is."[26]

> The people take a new delight in nature.
>
> The spirit of the new days, of our days, was to be delight in the life of the world; intense and overweening love of the very skin and surface of the earth on which man dwells . . . .(132)

This beauty of nature is evident on every hand in the endless wealth of beautiful sights, and delicious sounds and scents; in the lovely trees of the London streets sending floods of fragrance into the cool evening air; in the laden orchards and the song of the blackbirds; in the lovely greenery of the Thames and, along its banks, in the gardens "stuffed full of flowers". No slums, such as characterized England of the nineteenth century, mar the landscape, no "huge and foul workshops and fouler gambling-dens", surrounded by ill-kept, poverty-stricken farms.

> England is now a garden, where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt, with the necessary dwellings,[27] sheds, and workshops scattered up and down the country, all trim and neat and pretty (72).

Because the people possess every advantage - beautiful and

clean surroundings, leisurely outdoor living, wholesome food, and a variety of enjoyable occupations - and because they enjoy good fellowship with their neighbours and freedom from oppression, they have every opportunity for abounding physical health. The one case of sickness, Philippa the carver, may have resulted from too great a preoccupation with work in the best of environment (175). The other women are invariably healthy and good looking, the result of hard work in the open air. Ellen remarks:

> . . . I work hard when I like it, because I like it, and think it does me good, and knits up my muscles, and makes me prettier to look at, and healthier and happier (158).

As an old man reminisces of the past, the guest recalls the idleness of the women of the nineteenth-century commercial class, the "slaveholders", and the warped bodies of the poor working-class women:

> . . . [T]hey had hands like bunches of skewers, and wretched little arms like sticks; and waists like hour-glasses, and thin lips and peaked noses and pale cheeks; and they were always pretending to be offended at anything you said or did to them. No wonder they bore ugly children, for no one except men like them could be in love with them - poor things! (39)

Dick is a specimen of the strong valiant men, that, according to Hammond's account, felt themselves strong enough after the Revolution to build up the world again "from its dry bones" (131). His delight is in bodily exercise of all kinds, such as sculling and swathing, for he is like Face-of-god:

> . . . [F]ew could mow a match with him in the haymonth and win it; or fell trees as certainly and

> swiftly, or drive as straight and clean a furrow through the stiff land of the lower Dale; and in other matters also was he deft and sturdy. 28

Not only are the young men capable and beautiful in a manly way, but the old men are strong, bright and intelligent. The guest is surprised when the old man of ninety jumps down from the cart and strides away vigorously; so long as he is healthy and happy, his age seems to matter little. " . . . [H]e looked dry and sturdy like a piece of old oak . . . ." (49) The guest is also amazed at Hammond, the old man of over one hundred and five, whose eyes glitter and whose face, though "dried-apple-like", glows when he explains, with remarkable perspicacity, the marvelous transformation that England has undergone since the nineteenth century.

The remarkably good spiritual health of the people springs largely from the development of a morality of "active endeavor for the common good".[29] As long as no profit motive hinders it and the many beauties of nature and art encourage it, this active morality is bound to develop. The adaptability of human nature to environment gives rise to an appreciation of beauty and a pleasure which eventually result in virtue and happiness. To the extent that a person actively perceives his beautiful environment, he responds emotionally:

> "O me! O me!" exclaims Ellen, as she lays her sun-browned hand and arm on the lichened wall of Kelmscott. "How I love-the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it,-as this has done!" (202)

Her whole being responds to the beauties of nature and the

works of man's art. As a result of the emotional response there follows a moral response and, in the art-loving people of Nowhere, an aesthetic response as well.[30] Thus the faculties - perceptive, emotional, moral, and aesthetic - are bound closely together. The touchstone of the "good life" is beauty. It initiates the chain of reactions which eventually results in more beauty. Art is therefore, accumulative. In the chain of reactions, man's innate goodness develops as a result of beautiful environment, enhanced by pleasurable work, fellowship and equality.

Such is Morris's conception of the beautiful state, one in which the people may enjoy the pleasures of life to the full, because of their freedom "to work and to live and to enjoy".

As the guest concludes his journey he falls into reverie:

> There he stood in a dreamy mood, and rubbed his eyes as if he were not wholly awake, and half expected to see the gay-clad company of beautiful men and women change to two or three spindle-legged back-bowed men and haggard, hollow-eyed, ill-favoured women, who once wore down the soil of this land with their heavy hopeless feet, from day to day, and season to season, and year to year. But no change came as yet, and his heart swelled with joy as he thought of all the beautiful grey villages, from the river to the plain and the plain to the uplands, which he could picture to himself so well, all peopled now with this happy and lovely folk, who had cast away riches and had attained to wealth (200).

D. News from Nowhere - As a Utopia

A utopist must of necessity be in the humanist tradition, and as such he is interested in human nature and human affairs. In formu-

lating the principles of his utopian state, he must invariably consider the answers to certain basic questions, what is human nature like, and how can it best fulfill itself? Because he sees vast potentialities within himself, he concludes naturally that these exist in mankind generally. He then asks, "Are these potentialities realized fully, and if not why not?" His conclusion, that the fault lies in the organization of society, leads inevitably to the formulation of certain ideas of how to reorganize society so as to best serve humankind and bring out the potentialities that lie dormant. Any utopia thus embodies a good deal of social criticism of the period in which it is written. The numerous utopias written in England near the end of the nineteenth century indicate a general feeling that society was not organized for the optimum welfare of its people.

"The only safe way of reading a utopia", declared Morris, "is to consider it as an expression of the temperament of the author."[31] Nowhere is therefore not truly a social state, as one might suppose, but the expression of a state of mind, an expression of Morris's preferences, his ideal, or personal vision of the kind of society he would like to live in. It is, however, like other utopias, "a mirror-image, more or less distorted,"[32] of the conditions of life and social aspirations of people of a particular time and place, and as such, it has the express purpose of directing reform in various areas of life and of purging society of whatever ills afflict it. Plato and More placed their utopias in distant places and offered, more or less obliquely,

recommendations for the education of philosopher-kings. The late nineteenth-century utopias, in a more direct and bold manner, offered suggestions for the solution by the common people of the critical problems of their day.

As Clarke observes,

> . . . [A]ll the ideal commonwealths . . . whether they seek to perfect or to destroy the Victorian ideas of progress and industrialism, point to the rise of new forces that batter upon the structure of society . . . . Those who oppose industrialism and progress show their dislike in destructive visions of the future in which they wipe out the horrors of the Victorian Iron Age and go back to primeval simplicity in a new pastoral paradise. 33

As Morris analyzed the ills of society, he concluded that the encumbrances of civilization should be discarded, and men should return to a simple, natural life - a primitivistic society which would provide freedom to work, to enjoy, and to <u>live</u>. He wrote with the assumption that Nature has "ordained all things to serve the happiness of mankind."[34] If men's perversity did not "turn nature out-of-doors", she would freely allow them many benefits and pleasures. Elisabeth Cary points out that the people of Morris's utopia live in their idyll as do some of the so-called savages in the South Seas - "in a state of interdependence so perfect that if an individual lays down an obligation the community takes it up."[35] In short, <u>News from Nowhere</u> embodies a vision of soft primitivism in which both environment and human nature are benign.

In a period over 2000 years beyond Plato, and 400 years beyond More, Morris found it necessary to transform the utopian tradition to

fit his particular day. Whereas Plato and More take an unhistorical view, Morris, taking an organic conception of society,[36] sees it in the context of the continuity of history. His utopia may be labelled "scientific", under the influence of Marx, because it is based on attainable facts and worked out from the natural order of existing conditions. Hammond recounts the continuity of events in the Change. Morris has a greater passion for the "wholeness" of the individual and of society than either Plato or More, and certain ideas, more or less peculiar to the nineteenth century, find their way into Morris's utopia, such as the idea of brotherhood and co-operation, the setting of agricultural communities in which machinery and competition are avoided, the notion of equal rights for men and women, and the doctrine that in a true environment the innate goodness of man will develop.[37] Most of these ideas are borrowed from Robert Owen and supplement Carlyle's and Ruskin's.

In formulating his utopia, Morris does agree with Plato and More on many of the basic issues. He establishes his utopia on the foundation stone of justice or honesty, which he describes as "the careful and eager giving his due to every man."[38] He equates justice with virtue and virtue with pleasure in a state which must needs be more or less communistic in order that society may arrive at a more equitable arrangement in the matter of wealth. If pleasure is dependent on virtue, then the rich must be deprived of their wealth so that the vices of greed, pride, and idleness are curtailed. Crime is considered,

as in Plato, a corruption or disease which brings unhappiness, although criminals are not as in More placed in servitude until repentance. Morris carries the utopian ideal of equality of women with men into all areas of living - work, recreation, and fellowship. He feels, perhaps more intensely than the other utopists, the ignorance and misery of the lower classes and the need of higher moral and spiritual development in human nature, although "spiritual" may take on different shades of meaning. He values ethics highly, but he allies it with art, whereas Plato allies it with politics, and More with religion. Morris's whole social philosophy is marked by affinities with the "Cave of Plato" social theory. All the utopists see hope for the improvement of conditions in the implementing of at least a partial system of communism, in Plato only to a limited degree among the ruling classes in what is rather a totalitarian city state, in More within closely federated rural and city states, in Morris within a wide federation of local communes. Morris considers More's Utopia as the "historic link in the study of sociology, connecting . . . the surviving communist tradition of the Middle Ages with the hopeful and practical progressive movement of to-day . . . ."[39] The Middle Ages, he says, saw Socialism from afar, with its "visible and tangible art", but had to turn back because of the rising forces of commercialism, against which Morris, again in the nineteenth century, so vigorously protested.

The major difference between Morris and the earlier utopists is evidently his complete relaxation of restrictions. The strict discipline,

training, and obedience required in public matters in the Republic is modified somewhat in Utopia, and entirely eliminated in News from Nowhere. Plato regards democracy as the direct appeal by expert demagogues to a mob in Assembly and therefore almost the lowest form of government; More curbs democracy by placing too many limitations on freedom, because he, like Marx, fears the revolutionary proletariat; but Morris allows unlimited democracy, with matters to be decided by the will of the majority of those concerned. Plato allows one job for each individual which he must persevere in, More places a measure of coercion and obligation on the worker, but Morris endows him with measureless freedom, variety and pleasure in his work. Education in Plato is a rigorous, lengthy intellectual training, in More a highly valued "conditioning" in manners and virtue, and in Morris an informal, practical, and incidental "education" aimed at developing character. All emphasize environmental conditioning. In religion Plato provides the idea of a "City of God", where good is rewarded and evil punished after death, More requires a strict morality and a dynamic, though austere, religion under the penalty of ostracism or death while on earth and punishment in heaven, but Morris advocates only an all-pervading religion of humanity, prompted by a feeling of fellowship, with no repercussions beyond this life.

In the realm of personal matters the same principle holds. The family in Plato is regulated by a system of eugenics and controlled population; the children to be cared for by the state are selected and

others disposed of. More, who believes in the worth of the individual, advocates monogamy, an unlimited number of children, and reasonable family living. In the matter of dress, the citizens of More's Utopia dress uniformly in drab colors, in contrast to the variety, gaiety, and bright colors of Morris's utopians. People are not free-born in Plato whereas in More and Morris they are free-born; Morris makes a point, as well, of adding equality of condition.

In the Republic artists (poets) are banned because being imitative they "do not lay hold on truth"; in Utopia artists are lacking because of the fear that they will resist regimentation; but in News from Nowhere all the people are artists and are given every opportunity to ply their craft. All the people, as artists, are given by Morris the "highest" position in the state, in contrast to the soldiers in Plato and the scholars, or artisans in More. Morris's greater faith in humanity is responsible for the many freedoms his utopian people enjoy.

As a unique creature, "born out of his due time", Morris might perhaps have fitted into his own utopian community. Because of several basic difficulties it is rather doubtful that ordinary man might become the type of utopian man found in News from Nowhere. Morris avoids the tension between individual natural rights and the living social organism; he neglects the fact that man's individual tendencies, propensities, or "drives" are basic and practically unchangeable,[40] and thus the instinct of self-interest cannot be flouted; he allows his ideal

man to evolve into a "higher" type of rather superficial character, lacking intellectual depth and understanding of complex emotional problems, such as love; and he endows him with an extremely altruistic attitude which seems unlikely to develop within mankind.

Several of Morris's assumptions are questionable. Is it true that, when defects in society are eliminated, the defects in the individual will also disappear; that social institutions and the systems of industrialism and capitalism are totally corrupt and perverted; or that a return to a primitivistic state will solve the ills of society? Does art blossom at the highest point of the development of social life, and is it fundamental to happiness? Can the common man, in a utopian state, become completely competent to act for the good of others - his unlimited freedom result in other than anarchy and chaos?

The basic question - Can human nature be changed? - is debatable. Hertzler claims that the basic assumption of all utopias, that human nature is perfectible, is unsound: she quotes H.G. Wells in order to verify her position that " utopians did not perceive that life is a constant struggle and probably will always be."[41] According to Barker, the evolution of human conduct can never attain to "a static repose" of a final utopia where man will automatically do what he ought.[42] Even the ancient Greek utopist sounds a note of pessimism when he states "until kings are philosophers, or philosophers are kings, neither cities, nor the human race will ever cease to suffer ill."[43] Thomas More, however, places his finger on the real obstacle to the perfecti-

bility of the individual or the state when he cites pride as the "hell hound" that "crepeth in to mens hartes, and plucketh them backe from entering the right pathe of liffe; and is so depely roted in mens brestes, that she can not be plucked out."[44] Because of this matter of original sin, he takes a dim view of any ultimate realization of perfection and ends his utopia on a hopeless note: ". . . so must I nedes confesse and graunt, that many thinges be in the utopian weal publique, which in our cities I may rather wisshe for than hoope after."[45] Morris, on the other hand, applies to human nature the idea of Process, so popular among many thinkers in the late nineteenth century, and ends his utopia on a more hopeful note as he envisions "the new day of fellowship, and rest, and happiness."

Though there are distortions in Morris's mirror-view of his ideal, these are more or less negligible in view of the fact that he was describing, not a possible future state, but a preference. In spite of his apparent escapism into a primal and elementary state of simplicity where few challenges exist to develop really strong character, Morris expresses many high-minded purposes for civilization. In his concern for the "wholeness" of life, he claims for everyone a decent life which means a healthy body and active mind, occupation fit for a healthy body and mind, the incentives of which are the pleasures within work itself, and a beautiful world to live in.[46] He points out that the business of life should rest on the shoulders of the individual rather than on the state, that there is dire need for the

development of a social conscience, and that ethical and moral progress has fallen far behind scientific and intellectual advances. True civilization meant to Morris "the attainment of peace and order and freedom, of goodwill between man and man, of the love of truth and the hatred of injustice, and by consequence the attainment of the good life which these things breed, a life free from fear, but full of incident . . . ."[47] Viewed in this sense, all efforts toward the attainment of the "good life" are not mere "utopian" or "quixotic" schemes. Like all utopias, News from Nowhere points the direction that civilization perhaps should take, and in doing so it accomplishes its purpose.

Chapter IV

FORM AND TECHNIQUE

Although the main purpose of a utopia is oblique criticism of contemporary social and economic problems, the manner in which utopists achieve this criticism varies considerably. Plato and More, in depicting their states, make little direct reference to existing conditions or the past history of their societies. Eschewing the abstract quality of the Republic and the remoteness of Utopia, Morris gives us a more concrete and realistic presentation of utopian existence. Instead of the Socratic dialogue, which comprises Plato's method of presentation and, to a considerable degree, supplements More's voyage framework, Morris employs a romance form within which he makes liberal use of ordinary conversation. Usually a wise old philosopher or a friend, in the course of the journey, answers the questions of the traveler and convinces him, in less formal manner than by Socratic dialogue, that the people of their utopian land have achieved a "good life" in accordance with nature. The Republic's delicate play of irony and Utopia's disturbing web of ironies and ambiguities are replaced in News from Nowhere by a more direct presentation, marked by few subtleties. By boldly planting his utopia in the immediate vicinity of the Thames Valley and intimating that he as narrator was projected into the future and made the extraordinary journey, Morris gains a degree of realism

which neither Plato nor More were able to secure. By thus operating within the range of his own physical experiences, he achieves a concreteness in his descriptions of landscape and portrayal of character which is denied the Republic and Utopia. Ruskin has remarked aptly on the impossibility of painting well anything but what the painter, or writer we might add, has "early and long seen, early and long felt, and early and long loved."[1] He explains it thus:

> . . . [W]hatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land. Not a law this, but a necessity, from the intense hold on their country of the affections of all truly great men. All classicality, all middle-aged patent reviving, is utterly vain and absurd; if we are now to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be got out of our own little island, and out of these very times, railroads and all; if a British painter . . . cannot make historical characters out of the British House of Peers, he cannot paint history; and if he cannot make a Madonna of a British girl of the nineteenth-century, he cannot paint one at all. 2

Though Morris's utopia is an imaginative creation and may be charged with a measure of "middle-aged patent reviving", it is no mere nostalgic dream of a former age. It projects in a fairly realistic manner a future world which possesses the "strong stamp" of his own native land.

A. The Romance Mode

The romance form is ideally suited to Morris's purpose of depicting a perfect land because it is "nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream".[3] Morris does, in fact, borrow from medieval times the dream structure, as the outer framework, within which to work in the romantic mode, in order to expand the limits of life

further towards the conceivable, and create a world freed from all anxieties and frustrations. He had earlier in his life shown a tendency to lose himself in dream when the realities of life pressed too heavily. "My work is the embodiment of dreams in one form or another," he said,[4] but the dream need not be aimless, and now in his dream of Socialistic England it is natural for him to use the medieval device of the magic sleep and the dreamer with a purpose. He begins the tale in a mood of irritation after returning from the wranglings of a Socialist League meeting. As he muses discontentedly on his way home, he speaks his wish, "If I could only see a day of it!" And when he closes his door there remains a vague hope "for days of peace and rest, and cleanness and smiling goodwill" (4). Awaking in the night, his wits "preternaturally sharpened", he begins a series of surprising adventures in a dream world quite unlike his own and yet with a substantial relevance to it. His dream, not simply the wandering fantasies of a sleeping mind, reveals "the interpenetrating activity of desire and repugnance in shaping thought."[5] In the tale the dreamer takes on aspects of universal man, and the metaphorical structure within the story begins to emerge.

Better acquainted than most of his contemporaries with scandinavian and medieval literature, Morris found within the romance mode immense possibilities for the effective imaginative projection of an ideal state. Because it has a tendency to displace myth in a human direction and yet to conventionalize content in an idealized direction,[6a]

the romance moves in a dream-world between naturalism and myth and reaches in both directions. It does not need a framework of stable society as does the novel, nor is it bounded by the conventions of myth. Fantasy is thus allowed full play. The thinness and transparence of design, the lack of complexity and subtlety of plot, make it an ideal medium for conveying propaganda. The didactic chapters of News from Nowhere, especially those that describe the Change, disrupt only slightly the sequence of events.

B. The Use of Imagery and Symbolism

In the romantic mode, imagery has a tendency to become conventional in an idealized direction. The recurring and most frequently repeated images are drawn from the actual experience of the author, but suggest a paradisal garden. To Morris, who had spent his early years roaming Epping Forest and the Essex area, no more idyllic picture presented itself than that along the Upper Thames, which had largely escaped the ravages of commercialism. With his family he had occasionally made the delightful journey on the Thames from London to his beautiful home at Kelmscott. Now when he wished to figure forth a perfect world he drew from the Kelmscott landscape much of the profuse natural imagery that suits romance. The elm and chestnut trees, "the growth of willows", the "wide stretch of grass", "the thick whispering bed of reeds", "the hawthorn sprays", and "the long shoots of the wild roses" - - these are typical of the rich, tapestry-like detail which he weaves into his landscape. The "sweet strong whistle of the blackbirds",

the doves "cooing on the roof-ridge", "the waves of fragrance from the flowering clover amidst of the ripe grass" illustrate the close and vivid sensual imagery of Morris's idyllic dream-world. Harsh elements have been toned down to suit the romantic mode and "the desirable is presented in human, familiar, attainable and morally allowable terms."[6b] He achieves an atmosphere of a kind of perfection, a fragrant sweetness and wholesome charm, which touches chords of desire within every romantically inclined reader of his utopia. He frequently suggests the feelings he hopes to stir in his readers by describing his own:

> As for me I felt young again, and the strange hopes of my youth were mingling with the pleasure of the present, almost destroying it, and quickening it into something like pain (187).

Since modern industrial life was denied the rich evocative symbols that medieval life had held in all its details, Morris's dilemma was the old Pre-Raphaelite problem: how to bridge the gap that existed between the drab prosaic life of his day and the kind of emotional and spiritual experience that the artist felt was his concern. Yeats states the problem as a common experience of all artists of the Victorian age:

> How can the arts overcome the slow dying of men's hearts that we call the progress of the world, and lay their hands upon men's heartstrings again, without becoming the garment of religion as in old times? 7

Morris accordingly maintains in his utopia a medieval atmosphere and explores the possibilities of allegory and symbolism in an attempt to restore a harmony that modern life seemed to have lost. The overall

archetypal pattern of his utopia is the universal image of a Voyager on a miraculous Journey to a Promised Land. The England of the future takes on the archetypal pattern of a Golden Age, and the result is a nostalgic longing or Quest for a similar golden age for all mankind.

Symbolic of a striving for fulfilment, a cyclical sequence, marked by several phases, occurs in the life of the romantic hero. This sequence is emphasized by references to journeys, and to cycles such as those of day-night, seasons, and youth-old age. It is constructed so as to link together several archetypes which are fraught with social significance and together figure forth the theme. In the first phase the hero enters in the mental state of a new-born babe and is strongly associated with water and a boat. He proceeds in the next phase into an Arcadian world, or paradisal garden, of trees, valleys, brooks, and a few habitations, where life is characterized by chastity as a controlling principle and dominated by the romantic colors of green, gold, and blue. Visible throughout the romance is the "phoenix-symbol", representing a "universal becoming" or re-birth of society, not in the form of a gradual transformation, but as envisaged in The French Revolution by Carlyle, and as the "ragna rök" of Norse mythology which implies a violent and terrible revolution before the shining god Baldur shall return to rule forever over a golden age.[8] Closely associated with the phoenix death-birth of human society is the leviathan image in which the "dragon" was the sterility of the land, already overcome by the "deliverer", or the strong men, symbolized by Dick. Particu-

larly as the romance begins and when it concludes, the guest himself takes on aspects of a deliverer, or at least a bearer of the message, to his own Victorian society. The culminating symbol marks also the culmination of activities in News from Nowhere when, the journey over, everyone meets in a sacramental meal, the haysel feast. In this richly connotative symbol, as nature's children partake of the simple meal in fellowship with one another, the cyclical world of nature meets most directly the heavenly world, and the sacramental rebirth of a whole nation is symbolized. Though often in his journey the guest has received the cup of fellowship from the happy folk of this land, he cannot accept this final offer because he is not yet, except in desire, a member of their communion. Eventually, as the characteristic three-day cycle of the romance is ended, the guest returns from the "upper" world to his own and resumes his role in nineteenth-century life. He now possesses, however, a new vision of what society may become -- a golden age of "fellowship, and rest, and happiness".

In the romantic context, the idyllic imagery from Morris's immediate experience tends to take on secondary meanings illustrating what is good as well as what is desirable. This extension of imagery into symbolism fortifies the theme of the romance; for example the frequent use of flower imagery, especially of the rose, becomes symbolic of love and communion; the cooing of doves and the singing of birds evoke the idea of concord within individuals and society as a whole; the guests's swim before and after the journey symbolizes the beginning

and end of a cycle;[9] and the moonlight shedding profusely over the landscape at significant phases of the romance enforces the idea of chastity and acts as a central unifying image.[10] References to trees and water recur so frequently that they take on the conventional symbolic significance of the energy that is life itself. Morris speaks of "beautiful old trees overhanging the waters", of "trees having a time to grow again since the great clearing of houses", and of "Hammersmith, with its noble trees, and beautiful water-side houses". The whole utopian landscape has, running through it, the magnificent Thames, representative of the "water of life", on which laden barges float leisurely. Around the central images of the Green Tree and the Waters of Abundance, then, Morris's theme of a Golden Age takes shape, as it has done in so many other of his romances. Yeats has remarked thus:

> Morris "has but one story to tell us, how some man or woman lost and found again the happiness that is always half of the body . . . they must not forget the shadow of the Green Tree even for a moment, and the water of her Well must be always wet upon their sandals." 11

C. Characterization

Like the usual characters of romance, the people of News from Nowhere are little more than abstractions, or stylized figures, who possess none of the complexity and subtlety of "real" people or characters in a novel. Noyes accuses Morris of not understanding human relationships and of depicting the characters in News from Nowhere as "feather-headed, bubble-chasing infants".[12] However, Noyes is confusing

genres and applying to the romance mode a criticism appropriate to the novel. The characters release certain elements which make the romance genre more revolutionary than the novel. They stand for ideas and moral values:[13] David the type of the strong deliverer, Bob the intellectual, and Boffin the eccentric. The wise old man Hammond and the old grumbler Morsom are "tied to the past" and serve Morris's purpose well by their keen memory of the old life and the realistic contrasts they are able to draw between the old and new ways of living. Showing museum pieces of the historical past is a clever aid to Morsom's memory and an effective dramatic device aimed at realism. The guest, too, is a sort of museum-piece from some barbaric past, "a scarecrow amidst this beauty-loving people" (35). A sharp contrast is drawn between the women of News from Nowhere and those of the nineteenth century, regarding clothes, homes, physical appearance and mental outlook on life. It is clearly evident that, in contrast to the barren existence of nineteenth-century life, the women in Morris's romances have all "sat under the shadow of the Green Tree and drunk the Waters of Abundance out of their hollow hands . . .",[14] Clara a naive and attractive type, Philippa an ardent lover of creative work, and Ellen a type of Venus-figure, the goddess of love and creation. Each of the characters is, of course, endowed with the author's love of beauty and gift of happiness; each represents the virtues of hard work, fellowship, equality, and goodwill. Yeats sums up the characters aptly:

> All the men and women have turned everything into happiness because they had in them something of the abundance of the beechen boughs or of the bursting wheat-ear. 15

Though the characters are simple and undeveloped and move about more or less as chess-pieces at the author's whim, they somehow assume rather gigantic proportions because of their "big" philosophy of life. As a result they do successfully figure forth the life that man might desire, and in doing so they reveal how colourless and sapless is the life in Victorian England.

D. The Use of Effective Language

Morris's clever juxtaposition of fantasy and realism in the romance structure, in the imagery and symbolism, and in the characterization achieves an emotional effect that he controls skillfully. The language is especially apt. When he refers to nineteenth-century life, he deliberately uses harsh, cacophonous words, the connotations of which repel the reader. For example, he describes the "frightful noise of the hooters", the "smoke-vomiting chimneys of the soap-works", the "grimy sootiness" of the old bridges, the "hideous vulgarity of the cockney villas of the well-to-do", the "spindle-legged back-bowed men and haggard, hollow-eyed, ill-favoured women" with their "dirty and frowsy" clothes. On the other hand, phrases descriptive of the new life are glowingly attractive, euphonious, and of pleasant connotation. Morris speaks of "the full tune of the tinkling trowels", "the fair abode of gardens", "the hall redolent of rich summer flowers", and "a gleam of gold and silk embroidery". There is a quality of freshness, as well

as accuracy, in his Pre-Raphaelite "particularization" of nature and the heaping up of sensuous effects; for example, he mentions "the twittering and chuckling [of birds] as the wash of the boats stirred the reeds from the water upwards in the still hot morning" (189). Like Keats he had an eye for form, line and colour, although his descriptions are largely in mass, perhaps as a result of his many years of pattern-designing. Notice how well he fills in every space in the following picture of the Kelmscott landscape:

> I disentangled myself from the merry throng, and mounting on the cart-road that ran along the river some feet above the water, I looked about me. The river came down through a wide meadow on my left, which was grey now with the ripened seeding grasses; the gleaming water was lost presently by a turn of the bank, but over the meadow I could see the mingled gables of a building where I knew the lock must be, and which now seemed to combine a mill with it. A low wooded ridge bounded the river-plain to the south and south-east, whence we had come, and a few houses lay about its feet and up its slope. I turned a little to my right, and through the hawthorn sprays and long shoots of the wild roses could see the flat country spreading out far away under the sun of the calm evening, till something that might be called hills with a look of sheep-pastures about them bounded it with a soft blue line. Before me, the elmboughs still hid most of what houses there might be in this river-side dwelling of men; but to the right of the cart-road a few grey buildings of the simplest kind showed here and there (199-200).

Morris evidently admired a simple story, told in simple, flowing English and enlivened by concise and concrete imagery and glowing primary colors. In the panoramic view of the land of <u>News from</u>

Nowhere which he presents to his readers, his aestheticism fuses easily with his social philosophy in a simple, convincing picture, cumulative in effect and reminiscent of a medieval illumination or tapestry-piece.

CONCLUSION

The utopia, News from Nowhere, developed logically from the influences of the nineteenth century and as a result of the personality of Willam Morris and his passion for art.

He perceived in the manifestations of uglinesses within his environment a moral baseness which, he felt, could only be dealt with from within. Because of the disturbing influences of the industrial revolution and the attendant commercialism, the world was desperately in need of a humanization of life, a refocussing of attention on the needs of mankind. Morris believed that the "wholeness" of people's lives depended on the social, economic, moral, and aesthetic well-being of the entire nation and that therefore a total upheaval of society was essential. He proceeded to build, on the foundations that Carlyle and Ruskin had laid, a new world in which the whole life of mankind would be reconstituted and the arts revolutionized.

The resulting pattern of life, a medievalistic aesthetic socialism, was the only system, according to Morris, that could restore beauty to everyday life and achieve happiness for the whole mass of mankind. In such a simple life, marked by fellowship, freedom, equality and the pleasures of abounding health and creative work amid beneficent nature, popular art would spring forth as an integral part of the richness and goodness of life.

Thus, as a practical idealist, not as an economic theorist, Morris sought in News from Nowhere to inspire his fellowmen with a

vision of life as it might be lived. His utopia is, as well, an artistic creation of definitely Pre-Raphaelite inspiration and quality. Wrought by the hand and mind of the poet, artist, craftsman, and humanist, William Morris, it is a richly woven tapestry of late nineteenth-century utopian thought.

NOTES

(Note: The Cole edition of selected writings by William Morris, which has been the working text, will be referred to as follows - Morris, Selected Writings, p. - ; reference to the Collected Works of Morris, edited by May Morris, will be referred to by Volume number. Numerals which are placed within parentheses in the text are page references to Collected Works, Volume XVI, News from Nowhere.)

Preface

1. Mackail, I, The Life of William Morris, p. 328.

Chapter I

1. Young, Victorian England, pp. 250-251.
2. Ibid., p. 253.
3. Mill, Autobiography, p. 196.
4. Cole, Socialist Thought, II, p. 390.
5. Henderson, Letters of William Morris, p. 174.
6. Engels, Preface to The Condition of the Working Classes in England, p.3
7. Mackail, I, op. cit., p. 65.
8. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 212-13.
9. Ruskin, Works, XII, p. 56.
10. Young, op. cit., p. 228.
11. Ibid., p. 132.
12. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 151.
13. Young, p. 248.
14. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 317.
15. Henderson, William Morris, p. 38.
16. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, Introduction by May Morris, p. xxviii.

17. Collected Works, Vol. III, p. 3.

18. Mackail, II, p. 76.

19. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 657.

20. Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 194-195. "Cash-payment never was, or could except for a few years be, the union-bond of man to man. Cash never yet paid one man fully his deserts to another; nor could it, nor can it, now or henceforth to the end of the world."

21. Ibid., Bk. III, Ch. III. Carlyle attacked the Dilettantism of the idle aristocracy, the "Dandies" who lived as parasites on the work of the "Drudges".

22. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, p. 197. Compare his emphasis on production: "Were it but the pitifullest, infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name . . . . Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might."

23. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 209.

24. The matter of machine-labour and its produce became the crux of much discontent in nineteenth-century life and a topic of debate by outstanding thinkers.

25. Ruskin, The Stones of Venice, II, p. 165.

26. Fain, Ruskin and the Economists, pp. 89-90.

27. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 277.

28. Ibid., p. 264. "With our present system of individual Mammonism, and Government by Laissez-faire, this Nation cannot live."

29. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, p. 216.

30. See Carlyle, "Shooting Niagara".

31. Carlyle, Past and Present, Bk. I, Ch. V.

32. Ibid., p. 36.

33. Ibid., p. 37.

34. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 654.

35. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, Introduction by G.K. Chesterton, p.1.

36. Ruskin, Works, Vol. XVII, p. 105.

37. Ibid., p. 119.

38. Ruskin, Works, Vol. XVIII, p. 458.

39. Fain, op. cit., p. 150. He quotes Derrick Leon from Ruskin, the Great Victorian (London, 1949), p. 76.

40. Bloomfield, William Morris, p. 248.

41. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, p. 123.

42. Ibid., p. 34.

43. Mackail, II, p. 104, quotation from a letter to Maurice (1883).

44. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 157.

45. Rawson, William Morris' Political Romance, News From Nowhere, p. 71.

46. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 272. The king and lords, as equals with poor folk, shared wine, food, and silver. "It was to them [the poor] as though the kingdom of heaven had come down to earth."

47. Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought, pp. 285-89.

48. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 237.

49. Ibid., p. 304. Abbot Samson, in the twelfth-century monastery of St. Edmundsbury, epitomized the moral qualities of justice, pity, nobleness, sincerity, and social duty, so lacking in the nineteenth century.

50. Young, p. 89, footnote.

51. Ruskin, Works, Vol. XVIII, pp. 435-36.

52. Fain, p. 38.

53. Ruskin, Works, Vol. XVII, p. 105.

54. Ibid., p. 56.

55. Compare Fain, p. 104.

56. Ruskin, Works, Vol. III, Ch. XVII.

57. Townsend, Ruskin and the Landscape Feeling, p. 79.

58. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, Introduction by May Morris, p. xxxij.

59. Compare May Morris, II, p. 194. Contrast Bellamy, Looking Backward, pp. 287-88.

60. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, p. 179.

61. Compare Young, p. 170. "A Socratic search for the good had begun again to replace ideals which were toppling as their religious foundations cracked." He names News from Nowhere as a resulting manifesto.

62. Cf. Karl Litzenberg, "The Social Philosophy of William Morris and the Doom of the Gods," Ann Arbor (1933), 185.

63. Mackail, II, p. 133.

64. Bloomfield, William Morris, p. 248.

65. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, p. 244.

66. Jackson, Dreamers of Dreams, p. 151.

67. Welland, The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art, p. 21, in which are listed the following major disturbances: revolution in Paris, rioting in France, civil war in Hungary, Austria, Poland, Italy; conflict of ideologies and classes; publication of The Communist Manifesto; working-class unrest such as the Chartist uprising, etc.

68. Beers, A. History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, p. 283.

69. The Germ, "The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art," by F. G. Stephens, p. 63.

70. Ibid., p. 64.

71. Compare Leviticus 16:8.

72. The Germ, p. 151. See Christian's speech in "A Dialogue on Art".

73. Holman Hunt II, p. 452.

74. Holman Hunt, "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Fight for Art", Contemporary Review, XHX (1886), 826.

75. Humphry House, All in Due Time, p. 99. The problem of the Immortality of the Soul was central to the age.

76. Ibid., p. 158. "The pictorial allegories of Holman Hunt seem to me essentially Protestant and post-medieval in mood . . . ."

77. Welland, op. cit., p. 161.

78. Humphry House, op. cit., p. 156. "The Blessed Damozel" embodies these conventions. Compare also the complex symbolism in the painting, "The Girlhood of Mary, Virgin" (1849).

79. Humphry House, p. 156.

80. See Welland, pp. 114, 112. Rossetti wrote "Mary's Girlhood" to explain the symbolism in his painting, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin".

81. Humphry House, p. 154.

82. May Morris, William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist, I, pp. 302-303.

83. Holman Hunt, II, See Frontispiece: "The Scape Goat".

84. Holman Hunt, II, p. 463. Compare Welland, p. 42. He points out that moral didacticism was the spirit of the age.

85. Humphry House, p. 153. He points out that "Pre-Raphaelite medievalism was merely one aspect of Pre-Raphaelite naturalism."

86. Welland, p. 67.

87. Holman Hunt II, p. 436.

88. Compare Welland, p. 38.

89. Ibid., p. 15.

90. See The Germ, pp. 23-33, "Hand and Soul", in which Rossetti's qualities are well exemplified.

91. See Massingham, The Great Victorians, p. 331.

92. Compare Welland, p. 20. According to Welland, the cause of the failure of the Movement, and its besetting sin, was the apparent indifference to social problems.

93. Young, p. 154.

94. Cary, William Morris, Poet, Craftsman, Socialist, p. 45.

95. See Ruskin, Works, Vol. II, Part II.

96. The Germ, pp. 58-64.

97. Ibid., p. 155.

98. Welland, p. 96. This painting compares favorably with the "strong, unforced, full of nature" qualities of Rossetti's poem, "Jenny".

99. Holman Hunt, II, p. 488.

100. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 495. Morris explains "the root of the whole matter": "Everything made by man's hands has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature and thwarts her . . . ."

101. See Jackson, William Morris, p. 27. He quotes from the Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham, 1854 - 1870. George Birkbeck Hill, ed., 193-194.

102. Holman Hunt, II, p. 224.

103. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 496.

104. See Collected Works, Volume XVI, News from Nowhere, p. 20. The comment is made regarding "the stupidity" of the nineteenth-century, "which despised everybody who could use his hands" (p. 20).

105. See Elton, A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1880, II, p. 226.

106. Ibid., p. 232. Morris was aware of this danger, for in News from Nowhere Hammond remarks "we live amidst beauty without any fear of becoming effeminate . . . ." (72)

107. This weakness easily led to the School of Oscar Wilde of the late nineteenth century, "Art for Art's Sake".

108. May Morris, Vol. II, Introduction by G.B. Shaw, p. xl.

Chapter II

1. Young, p. 182. "In religion, as in poetry and art, the appeal of the Middle Ages was irresistible . . . ."

2. Jackson, Dreamers of Dreams, p. 164.

3. Ibid., pp. 164-165. Holbrook Jackson remarks that Morris was "kept a medievalist by Burne-Jones."

4. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, p. 85. "No words can tell you how its mingled beauty, history, and romance took hold on me."

5. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 415.

6. Cole, Socialist Thought, p. 423.

7. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 274-282.

8. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, p. 42 re the Crusades.

9. See Collected Works, Vol. III-VI.

10. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 198-273.

11. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, p. 56.

12. Collected Works, Vol. XV, p. 249. "Grief in thy neighbour's hall is grief in thy garth."

13. Jackson, Dreamers of Dreams, p. 147.

14. Grennan, William Morris, Medievalist and Revolutionary, p. 60.

15. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, Introduction by May Morris, p. xxj.

16a. Compare Rawson, op. cit., p. 65. 16 b. Mackail, II, p. 275

17. Ruskin, Works, Vol. X, p. lix.

18. Mackail, II, p. 275.

19. Ruskin, The Stones of Venice, Vol. II, p. 152, re vaulted roofs, flying battresses, grotesque sculpture, pointed arches - all or some of which together constitute "Gothic".

20. Ibid., p. 152 ff.

21. Ibid., p. 158. The Assyrian, Greek and Egyptian architecture had aimed at perfection and quenched the freedom of the individual worker.

22. Ibid., p. 163.

23. Ibid.

24. Ruskin, The Stones of Venice, Vol. II, p. 164.

25. Ibid., p. 165.

26. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

27. Ibid., p. 168.

28. Ibid., p. 169.

29. Ibid., p. 170.

30. Ibid., p. 172.

31a. Ibid., p. 181. 31.b. Ibid., p.p. 181 ff. A general conclusion.

32. Ruskin, Works, Vol. IV, p. 154.

33. Townsend, op. cit., p. 69.

34. Ruskin, Works, Vol. XI, p. 201.

35. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 323.

36. Ruskin, Works, Vol. III, Pt. 2, Sec. 1, Chapters 5, 6, 7.

37. Welland, p. 69. Quotation from Hunt.

38. See The Times, May 7, 1851, reprinted in Vol. XII of the Literary edition of Ruskin.

39. Ruskin, The Stones of Venice, Vol. II, p. 193.

40. Ibid.

41. Welland, p. 196.

42. Holman Hunt, II, p. 493. Cf. The Germ, p. 62.

43. Welland, pp. 113, 96. "Found" by Rossetti, and "The Awakened Conscience" by Hunt.

44. Welland, p. 97.

45. Barker, Political Thought in England, 1848 - 1914, p. 167.

46. The Germ, p. 63.

47. Holman Hunt, "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Fight for Art," Contemporary Review, (1886), . 739.

48. Holman Hunt, II, p. 488.

49. Welland, p. 42.

50. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 496. "To give people pleasure in the things they must perforce use . . . is one great office of decoration; to give people pleasure in the things they must perforce make, that is the other use of it."

51. Holman Hunt, II, p. 136.

52. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 8.

53. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 528. "The Art of the People."

54. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, p. 260.

55. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, p. 193.

56. Collected Works, Vol. XXIII, pp. 238-239. Compare Engels, pp. 53-109.

57. Young, p. 41.

58. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 361-362.

59. Ibid., p. 635.

60. Ibid., p. 231.

61. Ibid., p. 318.

62. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, Introduction, p. xx. Compare also the ideals of "On the Nature of Gothic."

63. Morris, Selected Writings, "A Dream of John Ball", Ch. X. There is a certain bias to this interpretation of the society of the Middle Ages.

64. Ibid., p. 489.

65. Ibid., p. 490.

66. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 163.

67. Ibid., p. 316.

68. Ibid., p. 349.

69. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 364.

70. See Mackail, I, pp. 349-350.

71. Morris's antipathy towards Bellamy's Looking Backward indicates his lack of confidence in state socialism.

72. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 622-623.

73. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 227.

74. Ibid., p. 82.

75. "SPAB", referred to repeatedly as "Anti-Scrape" - a movement which projected Morris into his political career.

76. Vallance, William Morris, His Art, His Writings, and His Public Life, p. 294.

77. Compare Henderson, The Letters of William Morris, p. 158. In a letter of 1882, Morris expressed his concern that "all the arts, even poetry . . . might be overwhelmed under the mass of material riches . . . riches which the world has made indeed, but cannot use to any good purpose . . . ."

78. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 634.

79. Mackail, I, p. 305.

80. Morris, Selected Writings, Introduction by Cole, p. xvii.

81. Ibid., p. 476.

82. Ibid., p. 533.

83. Henderson, The Letters of William Morris, p. 166.

84. Cole, Revaluations, p. 133.

85. Young, p. 46.

86. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 637.

87. See Butler's Erewhon.

88. Bellamy, op. cit., p. 119.

89. Ibid., pp. 195-196. Compare p. 64. The great day of the year was the annual Muster Day, October 15, when people the age of 21 were mustered in to perform labour and at the age of 45 were mustered out after 24 tedious years of service.

90. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 621.

91. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, p. 97.

92. Tillotson, "Morris and Machines", F.R. CXLI (1934), 464-471.

93. This is one of the weaknesses in News from Nowhere, a retrogression instead of progression.

94. Cole, Revaluations, p. 144.

95. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 640.

96. Ibid., pp. 640-641.

97. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 563-564.

98. Compare Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 91.

99. Ibid., p. 260.

100. Bellamy, P. 128.

101. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, Introduction by May Morris, p. xxviij.

102. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 493.

103. May Morris, II, p. 197.

104. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 636-637.

105. Lippincott, Victorian Critics of Democracy, pp. 63-64.

106. Mackail, I, pp. 349-350.

107. Mackail, II, p. 85.

108. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 631.

109. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 341.

110. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 624. Compare Marx's "historical perspective" of an organic society slowly evolving. Contrast May Morris, Vol. II, p. 502. She states that Bellamy's perspective is "unhistoric and unartistic".

111. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 587.

112. Henderson, The Letters of William Morris, p. 166.

113. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 374.

114. May Morris, Vol. II, p. 194. He believed also that the innate evil in everyone can be repressed by "equality of fellowship". The question thus arises, "If evil is innate, how can human nature ever be rid of it?"

115. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 212-213. Compare Morris's love of fellowship at Oxford, in the PRB, in his firm, etc.

116. Henderson, The Letters of William Morris, p. 157.

117. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, p. 128.

118. May Morris, II, p. 74.

119. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 537.

120. Mackail, II, p. 117.

121. Collected Works, Vol. XX, pp. 212-213. Compare also Litzenberg, p. 189, re "the promised return of Baldur".

122. Collected Works, Vol. XVI, p. 278. Contrast Bellamy's idea of a "bloodless revolution".

123. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 655.

124. Barker, op. cit., p. 187.

125. Marx's "historical analysis" is an application of the Hegelian dialectic to economics.

126. Barker, p. 186.

127. Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Ch. XIV, Sec. V.

128. See Mackail, II, p. 80.

129. Wilson, To the Finland Station, p. 307.

130. Lippincott, op. cit., p. 55.

131. May Morris, II, p. 74. She calls Marx the "prophet of that great revolt of outraged humanity against Capitalism which is the emotional force of the Socialist movement."

132. Morris, Vol. XVI, Introduction by May Morris, p. xxv.

133. Morton, op. cit., footnote, p. 137.

134. Cf. Lippincott, p. 55.

135. Wilson, To the Finland Station, p. 324.

136. Ibid., p. 307.

137. See Sabine, A History of Political Theory, p. 692.

138. Wilson, To the Finland Station, p. 312.

139. Quoted from H.G. Wood, "William Morris and Karl Marx", New Statesman 1942, p. 321.

140. May Morris, II, Introduction by G.B. Shaw, p. x.

141. Thompson, William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary, pp. 67-68.

142. Wilson, Triple Thinkers, p. 210.

143. Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, p. 326.

144. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 403.

Chapter III

1. Fain, p. 125 ff. Ruskin opposed the money theory because it gave power over labour, i.e., over human beings. Money, he concluded, is "a dimunition" of real wealth.

2. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 625. Morris points out that the wonderful machines, used wrongly, have "driven men into mere frantic haste and hurry, thereby destroying pleasure, that is life, on all hands ...."

3. Compare Butler's Erewhon.

4. In a society of equals no person could be found to play the part of torturer or jailer, though many would act as nurse or doctor (83).

5. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 212.

6. Jackson, William Morris, p. 129.

7. See p. 132. The idea of the world changing to a utopian state by means of "a second birth" is new to utopian literature.

8. Morris is mainly concerned with practical and technical education. See p. 18 where Morris satirizes the study of political economy and mathematics.

9. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 549. "[Y]ou cannot educate, you cannot civilize men unless you give them a share in art."

10. The best of books are readily available at public libraries including the Museum, Bodleian, Eton and Windsor.

11. Eton and Windsor, besides containing books, are used "as a dwelling for people engaged in learning; and folk from round about come and get taught things that they want to learn . . . ." (160)

12. Contrast Bellamy, pp. 216-218. Higher education is provided in Looking Backward for all persons to the age of 21 in order to increase efficiency in all kinds of labor, except the rudest, and "to fit a man merely to live." Morris generally ignores the satisfactions which come from intellectual pursuits: intellectual development is bound up with the sensuous life. See May Morris, II, p. 466.

13. Compare the appearance of the Pre-Raphaelite women, though the sultriness is lacking.

14. Compare Gissing, Ch. VII, especially pages 172-175, which is an exposition of Dickens' satire of English lower middle class women.

The contrast is due evidently to the sordid surroundings of industrial life which have totally disappeared. Compare also Engels, pp. 181-200.

15. There is a curious inconsistency here. It seems that people perform unpleasant work in the hope of wealth, whereas the enjoyment of work should be intrinsic.

16. Compare Morris, Selected Writings, p. 250. "[A]ll men shall work and none make to work, and so shall none be robbed, and at last shall all men labour and live and be happy, and have the goods of the earth without money and without price."

17. ". . .[W]e are now content to use such of its [the last epoch's] inventions as we find handy, and leaving those which we don't want." For example, instead of elaborate river locks, "simple hatches and the gates, with a big counterpoising beam, were found to answer every purpose, and were easily mended when wanted with material always at hand . . . ." (169-70)

18. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 582.

19. The question arises here of how these tools are manufactured without some measure of irksome machine labour.

20. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 653. People "having manual skill, technical and general education, and leisure to use these advantages, are quite sure to develop a love of art, that is to say, a sense of beauty and an interest in life, which in the long run must stimulate them to the desire for artistic creation, the satisfaction of which is of all pleasures the greatest."

21. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 653-654. "Our workers . . . will do their artistic work under keen criticism of themselves, their workshop comrades, and a public composed of intelligent workmen."

22. The pith of what Morris said was set forth in "On the Nature of Gothic".

23. Compare the awareness, of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, that a diseased society is responsible for a diseased art, as explained in chapter Two.

24. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 536.

25. Collected Works, Vol. XXII, p. 359.

26. Morris, Selected Writings, pp. 126-127.

27. Compare Mackail, II, p. 63. Morris claimed for each "his own due share of art, the chief part of which will be a dwelling that does not lack the beauty which Nature would freely allow it, if our own perversity did not turn Nature out of doors."

28. Morris, Collected Works, Vol. XV, p. 57.

29. Baugh, A Literary History of England, I, p. 1436.

30. Compare "Only good men can produce good art" - Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites.

31. Cole, Revaluations, p. 144.

32. Morton, p. 11.

33. Clarke, "The Nineteenth-Century Utopias", Quarterly Review, CCXCVI, 80-91.

34. Hertzler, op. cit., p. 222.

35. Cary, op. cit., p. 212.

36. Lippincott, pp. 67-68. In Plato the common man is considered incompetent to exercise political power, and therefore society is not truly organic.

37. These are ideas of Owen, the latter from the doctrine of Rousseau of the eighteenth century, that mankind is good but institutions are perverted.

38. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 535.

39. Vallance, op. cit., p. 245.

40. Hertzler, pp. 302-303.

41. Ibid., p. 304.

42. Barker, pp. 79-80.

43. Plato, V, p. 473.

44. More, p. 142.

45. Ibid., pp. 143-144.

46. Morris, Selected Writings, p. 585.

47. Ibid., pp. 560-561.

Chapter IV

1. Ruskin, Works, Volume III, p. 229.

2. Ibid., p. 231.

3. Frye, p. 186.

4. Mackail, I, p. 107.

5. Frye, p. 359.

6a. Ibid., p. 137. 6b. Ibid., p. 157.

7. Yeats, p. 200.

8. Karl Litzenberg, op. cit., 183-203.

9. Frye, p. 198.

10. Ibid., p. 206.

11. Yeats, p. 74.

12. Noyes, William Morris, p. 133-34.

13. Frye, pp. 304-5.

14. Yeats, pp. 69-70.

15. Ibid., p. 68.

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